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ISIS releases video of Niger ambush on US troops

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Islamic State militants have released a video that purportedly shows scenes from an October ambush in Niger in which four U.S. soldiers were killed.

The video, circulated on social media on Sunday, shows a small team of U.S. troops under heavy gunfire. Overlaid with music and propaganda messages, it opens with militants appearing to assemble before the ambush.

The nine-minute video then cuts to the view from a U.S. soldier's helmet, seized

by the militants after the attack, which shows the ambush in graphic detail. This part of the video suggests the troops were heavily outgunned, with the sound of fire pouring in from several directions.

The military said it was aware of the ISIS propaganda video and asked that the imagery not be released.

A portion of the video shows the Americans crouching behind their Toyota Land Cruiser and a truck. The soldiers fired smoke grenades, which could have been used to shroud their position and to guide in airstrikes.

SEE NIGER ON PAGE 5



SHOULDERING THE BURDEN

US, S. Korea to start military cost-sharing talks this week in Hawaii **Page 4**

Soldiers from the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division take part in a training exercise at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex in Paju, South Korea, last year.

Marcus Ficht/Stars and Stripes

PACIFIC

US aircraft carrier arrives in Vietnam for historic port visit

By TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

The USS Carl Vinson pulled into Danang Bay on Monday, becoming the first American aircraft carrier to visit Vietnam since the war there ended more than four decades ago.

The four-day port call — which U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Dan Kritenbrink called an “enormously significant milestone” that shows “U.S. support for a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam” — will include more than 5,000 sailors from the Carl Vinson, the guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain and the guided-missile destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer.

Servicemembers will participate in cultural and professional exchanges during community service projects, sports competi-

tions and receptions, a Navy statement said. The 7th Fleet band will perform free concerts.

Sailors also will visit a center for victims of Agent Orange, a defoliant used by the U.S. military during the war, according to a report in The New York Times. The chemical has caused major health problems for many individuals who were exposed.

“Through hard work, mutual respect, and by continuing to address the past while we work toward a better future, we have gone from former enemies to close partners,” Kritenbrink said in the Navy statement.

The U.S. normalized relations with Vietnam in 1995 and lifted an arms embargo in 2016, and the two former adversaries steadily have improved bilateral relations in all areas, including trade, investment and security.

The Navy now makes regular, small-scale visits to Vietnam that the service calls “Naval Engagement Activities.” Those events usually involve subject-matter exchanges in topics such as diving, salvage, undersea medicine and medical evacuations. The service also has used Vietnam’s Cam Ranh Bay to conduct maintenance on its ships.

The hospital ship USNS Mercy is slated to stop in Vietnam in the coming months as part of the annual Pacific Partnership exercise, which focuses on humanitarian assistance and disaster-relief preparedness.

“Our nations’ relationship has reached new heights the past few

years, and USS Carl Vinson’s port visit to Vietnam is a reflection of that,” Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Scott Swift said in the statement. “I am confident that engagements like this will further expand the comprehensive partnership between the United States and Vietnam.”

The visit comes as tension continue to simmer in the South China Sea, where more than \$5 trillion in global trade transits annually. Vietnam challenges China’s territorial claims in the sea, where Beijing has built up and militarized artificial islands that its neighbors depend on for fishing and commerce. The former Coast Guard cutter Morganthau was transferred to Vietnam last year, becoming the largest ship in the nation’s fleet.

“We recognize that relationships never stay the same. They either get stronger or they get weaker, and America wants a stronger relationship with a stronger Vietnam,” Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told his Vietnamese counterpart, Ngo Xuan Lich, during a visit to Southeast Asia earlier this year.

Separately from this week’s mission, U.S. officials have said American warships would continue sailing without prior notice close to the China-occupied islands and atolls, an aggressive way of signaling to Beijing that it does not recognize its sovereignty over those areas.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters Friday that China hopes



TRAN VAN MINH/AP

The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson is anchored Monday at Tien Sa Port in Danang, Vietnam.

the “exchanges between [the U.S. and Vietnam] would contribute to regional peace and stability in a positive and constructive way, instead of adding any unsettling factors.”

Danang, which was a major U.S. military base during the war, is now Vietnam’s third-largest city and is in the midst of a construction boom as dozens of resorts and hotels pop up along its scenic coastline.

Several Danang residents said Monday that they welcomed the Navy’s visit.

“During the war, I was scared when I saw American soldiers,” said Tran Thi Luyen, 55, who runs a small coffee shop in the city. “Now the aircraft carrier comes with a complete (sic) different mission, a mission of peace and promoting economic and military cooperation between the two countries.”

Huynh Quang Nguyen, a taxi driver, echoed the sentiment.

“I’m very happy and excited with the carrier’s visit,” he said.

“Increased cooperation between the two countries in economic, diplomatic and military areas would serve as a counterbalance to Beijing’s expansionism.”

The Carl Vinson, which is assigned to the Navy’s 3rd Fleet, has been patrolling the western Pacific after leaving its homeport of San Diego in January. Its strike group deployed to the region under the Third Fleet Forward initiative, which allows ships to remain in the 3rd Fleet chain of command while operating in 7th Fleet waters.

The Carl Vinson is filling in for the Japan-based USS Ronald Reagan, the Navy’s only forward-deployed aircraft carrier. The Ronald Reagan began its Selected Restricted Availability maintenance period in January at Yokosuka Naval Base after completing its fall patrol late last year.

Information from The Associated Press was used in this report. hlavac.tyler@stripes.com

Correction

A March 1 story about a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the proposed 2019 Cyber Command budget should have said Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, asked Adm. Mike Rogers, who leads U.S. Cyber Command and the National Security Agency, which federal agency or military command takes charge during a cyberattack.

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MILITARY

USS Wasp leaves Sasebo for patrol

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

The USS Wasp has left Sasebo Naval Base for the first time since arriving at its new homeport in Japan earlier this year.

The amphibious assault ship — which some have dubbed a miniature aircraft carrier because of upgrades that allow it to host the next-generation F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter — steamed away Saturday and was scheduled to undergo a “ready-for-sea assessment” before heading out on a routine patrol of the region.

One of the patrol’s goals is to “advance U.S. Pacific Fleet’s Up-Gunned (Expeditionary Strike Group) concept,” Lt. Cmdr. Adam Cole, a Task Force 76 spokesman, told Stars and Stripes in an email. Up-Gunned ESG pairs troop-carrying amphibious ships with surface vessels like guided-missile destroyers.

The Wasp is part of the Defense Department’s effort to put its most advanced capabilities in the region, an Amphibious Force 7th Fleet statement said.

F-35Bs, which are capable of

short takeoffs and vertical landings, were to embark on the ship during this patrol, the Navy said earlier this year. The stealth jets are flown by Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121, which arrived last year at nearby Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.

The Wasp can host more than 1,600 Marines. The 844-foot flat-top ship employs 31 aircraft, as well as Marine amphibious craft out of its well deck.

“What the crew of this ship has accomplished given the rigorous schedule of the ship is really amazing,” Command Master Chief Rudy Johnson II said in a Navy statement. “I am incredibly proud of the consistent ‘can-do’ attitude which emanates from these Sailors, and am very excited about the upcoming successes of this patrol.”

The Wasp patrol is among several Navy missions underway in the Asia-Pacific. Sister amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard — also homeported at Sasebo — arrived Sunday in Manila for a port visit after taking part in multinational Cobra Gold



JORDAN CROUCH/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The USS Wasp departs Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, on Saturday.

drills in Thailand. The USS Carl Vinson and its strike group pulled into Danang Bay on Monday, becoming the first U.S. aircraft carrier to visit Vietnam in more than four decades.

The Wasp serves under Amphibious Force 7th Fleet, the Navy’s only forward-deployed

amphibious force, headquartered at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa. It arrived at Sasebo Jan. 14 to replace the Bonhomme Richard after a 28,400-mile journey from Norfolk, Va. It was delayed after being diverted to the Caribbean to assist in disaster-relief efforts after two major hurri-

canes devastated the islands.

The Bonhomme Richard, which has been homeported at Sasebo since April 2012, will remain there for an undetermined period before heading to its new home in San Diego, where it will undergo maintenance and upgrades.

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Slur found on Okinawa base theater marquee

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Marine Corps is investigating after a racial slur was posted to a base theater marquee on Okinawa.

The incident happened Sunday at Camp Hansen — home to 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, 9th Engineer Support Battalion and 12th Marine Regiment — Marine officials said.

The slur, a derogatory term for blacks, was made from advertising letters on the marquee advertising the Marvel film “Black Panther,” which features a predominantly black cast.

The film was scheduled for a 3 p.m. showing, according to the Army and Air Force Exchange Service website.

It is unclear how someone would have gained access to the roof to change the letters.

Marine officials said the slur has been removed. “Marine Corps Installations Pacific is aware of an incident that occurred aboard Camp Hansen involving the posting of a racial slur on an AAFES marquee,” Marine officials said in a statement issued Monday afternoon. “Such actions and language are



Screenshot from Facebook

The Marine Corps is investigating the posting of a racial slur on a movie theater marquee at Camp Hansen, Okinawa.

“Such actions and language are in direct contradiction to the core values of honor, courage, and commitment that we stand for as ... Marines. This type of behavior is not tolerated by the Marine Corps.”

Marine Corps statement

in direct contradiction to the core values of honor, courage, and commitment that we stand for as United States Marines. This type of behavior is not tolerated by the Marine Corps.”

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact the Camp Hansen Provost Marshal’s Office at 098-969-4165 or DSN 315-623-4165.

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Sailor to be dishonorably discharged for dealing drugs

By CARL PRINE
The San Diego Union-Tribune

A drug-dealing sailor from Naval Air Station Lemoore lost her appeal and will be dishonorably discharged from the military. The woman said she cleaned up her act in jail but military appellate judges were not swayed.

In a decision issued last Monday, the Navy-Marine Corps Court of Criminal Appeals in Washington upheld the sentence meted out to Aviation Structural Mechanic Airman Jasmine N. McClendon on May 11 after her court-martial in San Diego.

As part of a plea deal with Navy prosecutors that capped her prison sentence at 14 months, McClendon admitted to distributing narcotics at Lemoore, near Fresno, violating the terms of a previous administrative punishment and multiple drug abuse charges. The military judge ordered her reduced to the Navy’s lowest rank and removed from the service on a dishonorable discharge.

That type of discharge is reserved for the most serious military crimes and can be dishonored only at a general court-martial proceeding. A dishonorable discharge triggers a wide range of other sanctions, including the loss of veterans’ benefits and the right to possess firearms.

McClendon’s attorneys argued that the discharge was too severe and cited her struggles with addiction, difficulty adjusting to Navy

life after enlisting at the age of 17, her rehabilitation efforts during 127 days of pretrial confinement and later helping Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents crack down on illicit drug sales.

While incarcerated, McClendon began to study Buddhism, took courses to control her addiction and stayed sober. Her attorneys requested a less-severe bad-conduct discharge, but the tribunal unanimously disagreed.

Writing for the panel, Navy Senior Judge Capt. Frank D. Hutchison pointed out that McClendon committed her crimes while serving 60 days of restriction following nonjudicial punishment for abusing cocaine.

Termed a “Captain’s Mast” in the Navy, this punishment typically involves restricting servicemembers to quarters, imposing extra duties and cellphone confiscation, plus other forms of discipline designed to correct misconduct instead of sending a sailor to a court-martial trial.

While living in a restricted barracks, however, McClendon kept drug paraphernalia and introduced cocaine, methamphetamine, psilocybin mushrooms, LSD and marijuana products to fellow sailors there, using her banned cellphone to facilitate the delivery of the drugs, court records show.

McClendon can appeal the decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces in Washington, but her case has yet to be added to its docket.

MILITARY



PHOTOS BY COREY DICKSTEIN/Stars and Stripes

Phan My, 15, center, from Cam Lo, Vietnam, speaks with Vietnam War veterans Bill Hutton, left, and Lynn Stermolle at her house after meeting them on the street Monday.

From wounded to welcomed: Marine vet returns to Cam Lo

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

CAM LO, Vietnam — In March 1968, rockets and mortar fire crashed down on Lynn Stermolle in this central Vietnamese village, leaving the Marine littered with shrapnel.

On Monday, a different barrage greeted him — a flood of schoolchildren welcoming him and others with smiles and questions.

"I am glad to meet you," Phan My, 15, said in near-fluent English, offering Stermolle, Marine veteran Bill Hutton and Timothy Davis, the founder and CEO of The Greatest Generations Foundation, a Coca-Cola from her home around the corner.

The bearded Stermolle, 68, beamed at the teen's gesture.

"It is nice to come back and look around and see everything's changed. It's really nice to see that," he said of the village that has blossomed from a collection of grass huts into a modern district center with paved roads, a schoolhouse and a sprawling soccer complex.

It's his first trip back in five decades. "None of this was here," he said. "It was entirely different."

Stermolle and Hutton are among 15 Vietnam veterans visiting the battlefields where they fought, as part of a program established by Davis' foundation.

Facing a bombardment of questions from Phan and two dozen other students gathered in the streets, Stermolle, of Stephenville, Texas, handed out American flag lapel pins and shook hands with the children before walking to Phan's house to meet her family.

He asked the students and their teacher — a 37-year-old man who gave his name only as Phi — about their knowledge of the war he fought in their homeland. He explained that he and the other veterans he was traveling with harbored no ill will toward the Vietnamese people.



Students from a secondary school in Cam Lo swarm Stermolle on Monday. Stermolle was wounded in action in Cam Lo during the Vietnam War.

Follow the trip of all the veterans who returned to Vietnam at: stars.com/go/vietnam68

"We like Vietnam," he told Phi and Phan. "Vietnam is a beautiful country. The people are very friendly to us. We like it. We hold no animosity or grudge."

The teenager told the war veterans she had met only one American — a teacher who came to her school to help with English studies.

She said she hopes one day to go to the United States.

"I really want to go to America, and maybe I can study there," possibly becoming a linguist Phan said.

The interaction was a far cry from Stermolle's last experience in Cam Lo.

The Marine was a rifleman moving from the fire base at Cam Lo to another location. But he never made it.

As he moved through the village's streets with his platoon, indirect fire came in from the North Vietnamese.

"You could hear it," he recalled Monday afternoon. "Jump on the ground and hope the explosion doesn't get you."

Eventually, it did. Stermolle was hit.

"The guys that saw it said they didn't understand how anyone could live through it," he said. "In truth, my flak jacket and my helmet gave themselves up for me. So, I just took a little bit of shrapnel."

It was among the darkest days in uniform for Stermolle, who was medically evacuated from the battlefield and received a Purple Heart for his wounds that day. His other awards and decorations after serving in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969 include the Navy Commendation Medal with "V" device for valor and the Navy Achievement Medal with "V" device for valor. He left the Corps as a gunnery sergeant and went on to a 27-year career with the Los Angeles Police Department.

"I was very lucky that day," he said. "It was a bad, bad day. A bad day."

His demons from that battle have subsided, he said last Monday, explaining he no longer feels particularly emotional when he thinks about the war.

"I've cleared all my ghosts," he said.

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US, S. Korea to open negotiations on cost-sharing

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States and South Korea will begin negotiations this week on sharing the cost of stationing about 28,500 American troops on the divided peninsula, the Foreign Ministry said Monday.

Talks about shouldering the burden between the two allies have often been bumpy, but they're expected to be more contentious this year as President Donald Trump has signaled he may press for the South to increase its contribution.

The countries also face concerns about a possible rift as South Korea presses ahead with efforts to engage with the North despite Washington's hard line over the communist state's nuclear weapons program.

The current special measures agreement, which was reached in 2014 and has South Korea paying about \$890 million this year, or just under half of the total, expires Dec. 31.

The first round of talks on the 10th SMA will be held from Wednesday to Friday in Honolulu with veteran diplomat Chang Won-sam leading the South Korean side and State Department official Timothy Betts leading the U.S. delegation, according to a press release.

"The delegations from the two sides will be trying to reach an agreement that helps strengthen the South Korean-U.S. alliance and joint defense readiness," the ministry said. "Our government will try to produce reasonable results that can be accepted by our people."

It didn't say how long the talks were expected to last, but the final deal must be ratified by South Korean legislators. The 2014 agreement took months to gain approval amid South Korean concerns over a lack of transparency about how the funds are spent by the U.S. side.

Most of the money is used to pay for South Korean labor, rent, utilities and the construction of barracks and other military facilities.

South Korea may take a more confrontational stance than usual because of Trump's trade policies, including his recent proposal to impose stiff tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, said Van Jackson, an international relations expert at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand.

"The traditional thinking for South Korea is that the alliance comes first, so any disagreement

about how to distribute the costs of the alliance is subordinate to the priority of maintaining the alliance," Jackson said in an email.

He also noted South Koreans are worried about the U.S. president's threats of military action against the North. "Under the circumstances, Trump Korea can bristle at greater burden sharing demands because Trump is being seen as unreasonable and the most likely catalyst for a war."

Trump raised concern in South Korea during the presidential campaign when he criticized what he called the unbalanced nature of the security alliance, saying Seoul and other allies should pay more for their defense.

Since taking office, Trump has toned down his rhetoric, but the issue came up during two summits held by Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, including their most recent meeting in Seoul in November.

Moon reportedly persuaded Trump to visit the Army's newly expanded Camp Humphreys to showcase the fact the South Korean paid for 92 percent of the \$10.7 billion construction project.

The two leaders "acknowledged the desire for equitable cost sharing of United States military forces stationed in the Republic of Korea," a joint statement said after the November summit.

They vowed "to continue to strengthen the alliance's combined defense posture and capabilities, including through defense cost-sharing measures in the form of special measures agreement discussions."

Anticipating a tough stance by Trump, Moon appointed Chang, who was then ambassador to Sri Lanka, last year to begin preparing for the negotiations.

South Korean Defense Minister Song Young-moo reportedly expressed concern last month that Washington may demand that Seoul pay more for the deployment of an advanced U.S. missile defense system known as the THAAD in a remote southeastern region.

Trump demanded last year that South Korea pay what he said was a \$1 billion price tag for the controversial battery, but the White House later walked back those comments.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at South Korea's Kyungnam University, also said there are still concerns about how the funds are spent despite new oversight provisions in the 2014 agreement.

"I think the biggest problem in the defense cost sharing issue is transparency of execution," he said.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
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WAR ON TERRORISM



SYRIAN RED CRESCENT/AP

Members of the Syrian Red Crescent distribute medicine for civilians Monday in Douma, eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus, Syria.

Aid convoy enters besieged rebel-held Damascus suburbs

By ZEINA KARAM
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Desperate for food and basic medicines, many of the besieged and bombarded Syrian civilians in Damascus' eastern suburbs of Ghouta waited on Monday as a 46-truck convoy organized by the United Nations and key aid agencies began entering the rebel-held enclave.

The U.N.'s humanitarian office said the convoy with health and nutrition supplies, along with food for 27,500 people in need, entered the town of Douma in the besieged eastern Ghouta. In a Twitter posting, it said, however, that many life-saving health supplies

were not allowed to be loaded.

The delivery would be the first to the region in nearly three weeks and the first to Douma, the largest and most populous town in eastern Ghouta, since November.

U.N. officials had said that lack of approvals and consensus among the warring parties, as well as the limited duration of a daily, five-hour Russian-ordered humanitarian pause, had made aid delivery impossible.

Eastern Ghouta, home to some 400,000 people, has been under a crippling siege and daily bombardment for months. More than 600 civilians have been killed in the past two weeks alone.

"This delivery of assistance is a

first positive step that would lessen the suffering of the civilians in the area," said Ingy Sedky, a spokeswoman for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Damascus.

"However, more needs to be done in the coming period," she added.

"A one-time aid delivery will never be enough to fulfill the needs. Repeated and continuous access to Eastern Ghouta by humanitarian organizations is a must."

Sedky said Monday's delivery includes 5,500 food and flour bags — enough for 27,500 people — in addition to wheat flour, medical and surgical items.

Turkey holds 4 ISIS suspects over US Embassy threat

By SUZAN FRASER
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkish police detained four Islamic State suspects as part of an investigation into a possible attack on the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, the country's state-run news agency reported Monday.

The arrests came as the embassy was closed Monday over an unspecified security threat.

The Anadolu Agency said police detained four Iraqi nationals in connection with the threat against the embassy. Two of them were detained on a bus at a security check on a highway linking the Black Sea city of Samsun to Ankara. Two others were detained in Samsun by police acting on information they provided, the report said.

The agency identified the suspects by their first names only.

Security was high outside the U.S. Embassy on Monday, and police searched pedestrians before allowing them to enter the street where the embassy and other buildings are located.

The U.S. Embassy said on its web page late Sunday that the mission would be closed due to a security threat and urged U.S. citizens to avoid the embassy as well as large crowds. It also advised citizens to "keep a low profile."

Embassy spokesman David Gainer said the mission would open Tuesday but would not pro-

vide visa services or services to American citizens — in an apparent measure aimed at limiting visits and minimizing risks to the public.

"We appreciate the continuing strong support we receive from the Turkish National Police and Turkish security services in making our facilities as safe as possible," Gainer said.

Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdag said the U.S. Embassy had shared intelligence with Turkey's intelligence and security authorities, leading to "important results." He said the U.S. diplomatic missions in Istanbul and the southern city of Adana remained open for business.

The Ankara governor's office said authorities had reviewed security in the capital and had taken additional measures, following intelligence provided by U.S. "sources" about possible attacks against the embassy or where Americans are staying.

Earlier Monday, police detained 12 ISIS suspects in Ankara and were searching for eight others, Anadolu reported, although it was not clear if those arrests were linked to the threat against the U.S. Embassy.

The Ankara chief prosecutor's office said in a statement that all of the suspects captured in the police operation were foreign nationals who were trying to recruit members for ISIS.

Niger: AFRICOM condemns video, urges news media not to buy, show it

FROM FRONT PAGE

U.S. officials have said French air support didn't arrive until two hours after the attack. U.S. troops didn't call in for air support until about one hour after the assault, military officials have said. The apparent delay could have been a result of radio communication problems.

With no place to take cover, two soldiers broke into a sprint, the video shows. One soldier fell after being shot. Moments later, helmet cam video shows the soldier shot again at close range as masked militants advanced around him.

Killed in the ambush were Sgt. La David Johnson and Staff Sgt. Bryan C. Black, Jeremiah W. Johnson and Dustin M. Wright.

The roughly 40-person U.S. Nigerien patrol, which included 12 U.S. soldiers, came under attack on the morning of Oct. 4 by about 50 ISIS fighters as the unit was returning to its camp. The propaganda video showed only a small group of U.S. soldiers, who appear to have been separated from the rest of their team.



COURTESY OF THE U.S. ARMY/AP

From left, Staff Sgt. Bryan C. Black, 35, of Puyallup, Wash.; Staff Sgt. Jeremiah W. Johnson, 39, of Springboro, Ohio; Sgt. La David Johnson, of Miami Gardens, Fla.; and Staff Sgt. Dustin M. Wright, 29, of Lyons, Ga., were killed in Niger in October when a joint patrol of American and Nigerien forces was ambushed by militants believed linked to Islamic State.

The patrol had left the Nigerien capital of Niamey on Oct. 3 to meet with local leaders near the village of Tongo Tongo, about 53 miles to the north.

U.S. Africa Command continues to investigate the attack and whether U.S. troops had sufficient resources to carry out patrols where different militant groups operate. The military says

its forces are deployed as advisers to local troops.

In the wake of the ambush, some lawmakers are questioning the wisdom of the Niger mission.

"We don't know exactly where we're at in the world militarily and what we're doing," Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said on NBC's "Meet the Press" after the attack. There are about 800



Militant video

This screen grab is from video released by ISIS that claims to show an October ambush in Niger in which four U.S. soldiers were killed.

American troops in Niger.

AFRICOM, expected to wrap up its investigation in the coming weeks, condemned the video.

"The release of these materials demonstrates the depravity of the enemy we are fighting," AFRICOM said in a statement.

"We encourage the news media

to deny ISIS a propaganda success by not purchasing, showing or bringing undue attention to these images as it re-victimizes the affected families, amplifies IS atrocities and aids in their recruiting."

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NATION

Trump-Netanyahu visit comes amid legal distractions

By JOSH LEDERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — There's much to celebrate but plenty of cause for trepidation, too, as President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Monday at the White House.

For his talk about brokering the "ultimate deal" between Israelis and Palestinians, Trump's long-awaited peace plan has yet to arrive, even as Palestinians and other critics insist it will be dead on arrival. And although Israel's government is overjoyed by Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital — with a U.S. embassy set to open in the holy city in May — misgivings are percolating under the surface over Iran, where Israel sees Trump's efforts so far to crack down on Israel's arch-enemy as lacking.

One major, growing concern is that the United States is acquiescing to Iran's growing presence in Syria and influence in Lebanon — two Israeli neighbors.

"If we don't come up with a strategy against Iran, we're going to make Israel go to war here pretty soon," Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

Swirling legal investigations distracting both leaders at home, and a stunning fall from grace for Trump's son-in-law and would-be peace negotiator, Jared Kushner, have added to the mix of politics, personalities and historical grievances that have always hindered U.S.-Palestinian peace efforts. An already volatile situation now looks even more combustible than normal.

Netanyahu arrived in the United States over the weekend as Washington was gearing up for

the annual conference of AIPAC, the powerful pro-Israel lobby. He held a meeting and working lunch with Trump on Monday and planned to speak at the conference later in the week. Top-ranking U.S. officials including Vice President Mike Pence and U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley will also address the conference.

In a pointed reminder of his troubles at home, Netanyahu and his wife were questioned separately by police for hours on Friday before the prime minister left the next day for Washington. Those interviews were part of an investigation into a corruption case involving the country's telecom giant, and police have recommended indicting Netanyahu on corruption charges in two other cases, as well.

The Trump family has legal problems of its own. Kushner, Trump's point man for the Middle East, is under intense scrutiny over his business dealings as special counsel Robert Mueller barrels forward with his Russia probe. Kushner has also been stripped of his top security clearance in another blow to his credibility as an international negotiator.

Kushner's peace proposal is near completion, U.S. officials have said, but Palestinians have already written off Trump's administration as a viable mediator following his decision last year to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv. A ribbon-cutting for an interim facility is being planned to coincide with the 70th anniversary of Israel's independence.

Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer, speaking at AIPAC on Sunday, said the Jewish people will "forever" remember Trump's decision.



PHOTOS BY ALBERT CESARE, THE MONTGOMERY (ALA.) ADVERTISER/AP

A crowd poses for a photo during the annual commemoration of "Bloody Sunday," the day in 1965 when voting rights protesters were attacked by police as they attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.

'Bloody Sunday' commemorated in Ala.

Associated Press

SELMA, Ala. — Several members of Congress joined civil rights activists and others Sunday afternoon for the annual commemoration of a day of racial violence in Selma, Ala., dating to 1965.

A bipartisan group including Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., led the crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. It was to recall "Bloody Sunday," when voting rights protesters were attacked by police as they attempted to cross the bridge.

"It's very meaningful to come back here, to come back to this historic site and be here with so many wonderful people. It's a beautiful day here today in Selma," Lewis said as he was surrounded by his peers, the Selma Times-Journal reported.

Lewis, then a young organizer, was among those injured then. That violence set the stage for the Selma-to-Montgomery march, which helped build support for congressional approval of the Voting Rights Act months later.

Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., who spoke at the Martin and Coretta King Unity Breakfast, said she felt a mixture of emotions walking across the bridge.



Andrew Hill sits near the bridge during the event. Hill, who was serving in Vietnam in 1965, said he has attended the last 10 anniversaries.

"It's bittersweet," Harris said. "It's sadness and pain at the thought of what they endured 53 years ago, but it's also inspiration about again fighting for the best of who we are and honoring those who have been heroes and are

still heroes."

The annual celebration drew tens of thousands of people in 2015, when then-President Barack Obama spoke near the base of the bridge as former President George W. Bush listened.

Bill Cosby goes to court in an effort to stop his accusers from testifying

By MICHAEL R. SISAK
Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. — Bill Cosby went to court on Monday to stop some of his dozens of accusers from testifying at his April 2 sexual assault retrial.

Cosby's retold defense team, led by former Michel Jackson lawyer Tom Mesereau, is due to clash with prosecutors over the potential witnesses at a pretrial hearing.

Cosby, 80, walked into the courthouse in suburban Philadelphia Monday morning on the arm of his spokesman.

Judge Steven O'Neill spoke briefly from the bench before

adjourning into chambers for a conference with prosecutors and Cosby's lawyers. O'Neill outlined the matters that need to be resolved, including whether as many as 19 women can testify against Cosby and if his lawyers can discuss his civil settlement with accuser Andrea Constand.

O'Neill noted that since this is a new trial, none of his rulings on issues from the first trial will carry over. He didn't express confidence that they'll resolve everything in the two days allotted for the pretrial hearing, "but we can certainly try." O'Neill also presided over the first trial.

Prosecutors raised the prospect

of calling as many as 19 women to the witness stand, including model Janice Dickinson, in an attempt to show that an alleged 2004 assault that led to Cosby's only criminal charges was actually part of a five-decade pattern of him drugging and harming women.

Jurors did not have that context when they ended Cosby's first trial last year in a deadlock. A judge allowed just one other accuser's testimony but barred any mention of about 60 others who have come forward to accuse Cosby in recent years.

The only other hints jurors got of Cosby's past came from de-

position excerpts from 2005 and 2006 in which he admitted getting quaaludes to give to women he wanted to have sex with.

Cosby's lawyers are urging O'Neill to again limit the number of accusers allowed to testify. They argue that some of the women's allegations date back to the 1960s and are "virtually impossible to defend against."

Cosby's lawyers argue that the other accusers' accusations are largely unsubstantiated and are not enough to meet the strict legal standard for allowing prosecutors to present evidence of a defendant's prior bad conduct.

They said they would seek to

delay the retrial if any of the women were allowed to testify so they could have more time to investigate their claims. Jury selection is slated to begin March 29.

Monday's hearing came just 10 days after Cosby's daughter, Ensa, 44, died of kidney disease. His lawyers have given no indication they would seek to delay the hearing or the retrial.

In January, Cosby emerged from a long period of near-seclusion to have dinner with friends at a restaurant and give his first comedy performance in more than two years. Legal experts said the nights on the town appeared to be an effort to rebuild his good-guy image.

NATION

Ohio race shows how NRA flexes political muscle

Associated Press

WASHINGTON—The National Rifle Association pounced when former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, a Democrat running for the U.S. Senate, declared at an AFL-CIO event in Cleveland that the death of conservative Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia “happened at a good time.”

Scalia remains a hero to many gun owners, and the NRA alerted its members to Strickland's disrespect. It was part of a barrage by the group to portray its one-time ally as an anti-gun politician interested only in money and power.

The anti-Strickland campaign in the battleground state of Ohio two years ago is a window into how the gun rights group wields its political muscle. That clout will be on display heading into the 2018 midterm elections as gun control advocates demand swift action following the Feb. 14 shooting at a high school in Florida.

The NRA's deep pockets and bare-knuckled approach leave the impression it effectively purchases loyalty from lawmakers. But the NRA actually donates small amounts of money to candidates when compared with the large sums it spends on potential get-out-the-vote operations and ad campaigns.

NRA-funded advertisements on cable networks and the internet during the months and weeks before an election are carefully crafted to warn members of candidates that, if elected, it claims will come for their guns. The NRA's political action committee, the Political Victory Fund, grades elected officials on an A to F scale that steers members to pro-gun candidates.

The Political Victory Fund and the NRA's lobbying arm spent about \$52.5 million during the 2016 elections on “independent expenditures,” according to OpenSecrets.org.

Nearly 70 percent of the NRA's 2016 budget was used to target Democrats, with Hillary Clinton topping the list of candidates the group sought to defeat. The rest went to backing Donald Trump and congressional Republican lawmakers who've consistently shot down attempts by Democrats to approve gun control measures.

Pressure for at least modest firearms restrictions is growing after 17 people were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, which raised the stakes for the NRA. Trump stunned GOP allies last week when he urged substantial changes to the nation's gun laws. After meeting with Trump, NRA leaders declared he and his administration “want gun control.”

The figures compiled by Open

Secrets show that in Ohio the NRA spent nearly \$1.6 million to oppose Strickland in the 2016 Senate race while devoting about half as much to support the Republican incumbent, Sen. Rob Portman.

The NRA donated \$9,900 directly to Portman's campaign, the same amount the group gave to 12 other Republican lawmakers. Unlike independent expenditures, donations from individuals and PACs are capped for each election cycle. Portman said the NRA's money represented just a fraction of the more than \$25 million his campaign raised in 2016, and he denied the group acquired any leverage through the donations.

The NRA's Political Victory Fund ran its first ad against Strickland in July when the Ohio Senate race was still competitive, and the 30-second spot illustrates the gun group's tactics. Strickland is portrayed as a traitor for turning his back on gun rights.

Strickland said the NRA succeeded in shifting the focus on many Ohioans had of him. Suddenly it didn't matter as much that he was a steelworker's son who'd grown up on a dirt road in the state's Appalachian region. Or that he was raised among guns and just a few years before the Senate race had earned the NRA's A+ rating.

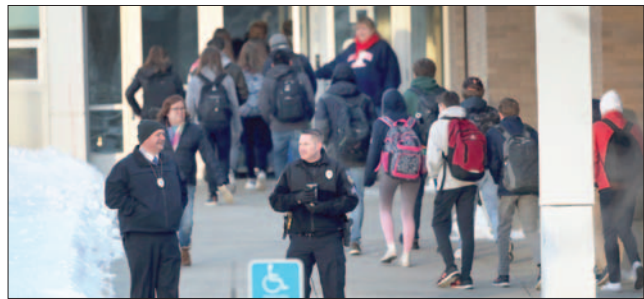
Strickland served in Congress for more than a decade until 2006, when he successfully ran for governor with the NRA's backing. He got the group's support when he ran for re-election in 2010 but lost to Republican John Kasich as the governor's race centered on economic woes gripping the state.

The NRA's opinion changed drastically after Strickland in 2014 became president of the left-leaning Center for American Progress Action, which the NRA called a “radical anti-gun group” for proposing gun control measures.

When Strickland sought to unseat Portman two years later, the NRA “reframed the race in ways that were detrimental to me,” he said. Trump won Ohio by about 447,000 votes. Scioto, Strickland's home county on the border with Kentucky, backed Trump and Portman overwhelmingly.

The NRA's opposition had an effect, Strickland said, but he didn't believe it was the deciding factor in his loss to Portman.

Portman raised \$25 million, more than twice as much as Strickland did, and won over labor unions that had once been firmly in Strickland's corner. As Strickland failed to gain traction with voters, national Democrats pulled millions of dollars in planned pro-Strickland ads out of the state more than a month before the election.



DAVID JONES, MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/AP

Police officers stand guard as Orono High School students arrive for school in Orono, Minn., on Feb. 22, one day after a threat posted on social media caused the school to go on lockdown.

After Parkland, even idle threats to schools get a tough response

By STEVE KARNOWSKI
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Fifteen students in one Florida school district are facing felony charges and prison time for allegedly making threats since the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School massacre. Meanwhile, an autistic Minnesota high school student whose alleged threat led to a six-hour lockdown is in juvenile court and has received an outpouring of sympathy.

The Feb. 14 killings of 17 people in Parkland, Fla., have ignited a wave of copycat threats, as happens after nearly every high-profile school shooting. Most prove unfounded but cause big disruptions to schools while tying up police for hours or even days.

Experts say authorities' swift responses underscore a climate in which even idle threats result in serious consequences.

The Volusia County Schools system in east-central Florida isn't taking chances. Sheriff Michael Chitwood made it clear he had a zero-tolerance policy as threats began after Parkland. On

Thursday, he went further, saying students or their families would have to pay the costs of the investigations — at least \$1,000 and sometimes much more.

District spokeswoman Nancy Wait said the message is clear: We're not joking around.

“Unfortunately, that word didn't get to the students, and we started seeing more students making threats in the classroom, and that was frightening to their classmates,” she said. “Most of the time these students didn't have access to weapons, but they were still making threats to shoot up their schools.”

The Educator's School Safety Network, which tracks reports of school threats and violent incidents across the country, has documented a spike since Parkland. The Ohio group counted 797 as of Sunday. Most (743) were for threats of various kinds, including gun and bomb threats. The threats were made mostly via social media (331) and verbally (119).

That amounts to about a sevenfold increase in the usual rate, director of programs Amy Klinger

said.

She expects consequences of post-Parkland threats to be harsher than before.

“They almost have to be,” she said. “Do we want to do this for the rest of the school year? Do we want to have this constant chaos and fear, and people being upset? How much learning is going on?”

It's not clear yet what the consequences will be for an autistic boy whose social media threat to shoot up Orono High School in suburban Minneapolis prompted a lockdown Feb. 21 that kept students confined to classrooms for nearly six hours. Prosecutors won't say what the charges are because it's a juvenile case.

The community's reaction was unusually sympathetic. Another student's mother set up a GoFundMe campaign with the boy's family's permission that by Sunday was near its \$40,000 goal to help cover the family's legal and treatment expenses. Claire Wnuk Berrett wrote on the fundraising page that some kids on the autism spectrum don't have the language or social skills to adequately express their needs.

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NATION

White House offers rare direct criticism of Putin

By JOHN T. BENNETT

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — In a rare move, the White House criticized the Russian government and Vladimir Putin directly on Monday over its backing of the Syrian government's military actions and the Russian president's recent comments about his nuclear arsenal.

In a Sunday telephone conversation with U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May, President Donald Trump "agreed that Russian

President Vladimir Putin's recent statements on nuclear weapons development were irresponsible," the White House said in a statement summarizing the call.

Last week, Putin said Russia has developed new, strategic, nuclear weapons that would leave U.S. missile defense systems "useless." His comments were accompanied by a video showing Russian nuclear weapons headed for Florida, where Trump often spends weekends and vacations at his Mar-a-Lago resort.

Trump has withheld any critical words

for Putin and only recently acknowledged Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. He still hopes to thaw relations from the former Cold War foes, but there is little evidence he is moving close to that goal.

The criticism of Putin comes as Special Counsel Robert Mueller continues looking into whether Trump and his campaign associates worked with Russia to disrupt the 2016 election — and whether the president obstructed justice in response to the probe.

The White House also panned the Krem-

lin for backing Syrian President Bashar Assad's military offensive in Eastern Ghouta, which is controlled by opposition forces as that country's yearslong conflict continues.

Trump and May "agreed that the Syrian regime and its Russian and Iranian sponsors must immediately and fully implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 2401, which calls for an immediate ceasefire across Syria," the White House said in the statement. "The leaders condemned sharply the bombing in East Ghouta."

In Texas Republican primary, it's who can love Trump the most

By PAUL J. WEBER

Associated Press

NEW BRAUNFELS, Texas — George P. Bush's campaign flyers in Texas declare that he's "standing beside our president" — the one who called his dad, Jeb, an embarrassment to his family and a pathetic person.

At a political forum outside San Antonio, another Republican candidate brags about his "bigly" wins over Democrats. Another hopeful in Houston, just days after a mass shooting at a Florida high school killed 17 people, sent voters a photo of herself holding an assault rifle — below the words "Kathleen Wall stands with Trump."

Texas holds the nation's first 2018 primary elections Tuesday, and the campaign is providing a vivid exhibition of the Trump effect in GOP politics. Some races are playing out in a road show of one-upping emulation of the combative president, in which there's no such thing as cozying up too close or too ardently, regardless of his rough edges or low approval ratings nationwide.

"I'm Robert Stovall and, like President Trump, I realize the swamp is the problem," begins a campaign ad for Stovall, a San Antonio Republican Party leader now running for Congress. He stands in a literal swamp wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat and cocks a shotgun at the end.

It's like nothing seen before in Texas politics, even when a Texan was in the White House. Love of George W. Bush's style of big-government conservatism was a staple of campaigns here. A decade later, his nephew George P. Bush, the Texas land commissioner, is thanking President Donald Trump's son Donald Trump Jr. for endorsing him in his bid for re-election.

Texas candidates aren't alone in courtship of Trump diarchs who make up the GOP base — and who can be counted on to show up in typically low-turnout primary elections. Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, who is running for governor, has trumpeted Trump's policies while an outside group accuses

his GOP rival of "abandoning" the president. In Indiana, three Republicans running for Senate are all portraying themselves as his most steadfast ally.

The impression of a Trump White House at war with its enemies is stoking the atmosphere.

"It's about he's our Republican president and if we don't stand together and we don't defend the party and conservative ideas, no one is," said Brendan Steinhauser, an Austin-based Republican strategist. A Quinnipiac University survey in late February put Trump's approval rating at 86 percent among Republicans but just 37 percent overall.

As Republicans brace for a difficult election this November — the president's party typically loses congressional seats in the midterm cycle — they could not have asked for a gentler warm-up than Texas, where the GOP holds such a commanding edge that most election-year drama dissolves once the primaries are done. Democrats haven't won a statewide race since 1994 and are not seen as favored to flip any of six congressional seats opened up by GOP retirements on Capitol Hill.

Among those leaving is U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith, who in January lauded Trump's physical fitness and said Americans were better off getting their news straight from Trump than from the media. Some of the 18 Republicans trying to replace him don't stop there. Outsider candidate Mauro Garza said he is running because "Donald Trump said I could be here." Chip Roy, a former top aide to Republican U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, said he is running rhetorically asking how much better citizens' lives were a year into a Trump presidency.

Congressional candidate Francisco Canseco cast the alternative in dark terms to one crowd in Gonzal County, who is swayed between Democratic-leaning San Antonio and liberal Austin and went more than 70 percent for Trump in 2016. "If Hillary had won last election, America would be gone. Our Republic as we know it would be dissolved," he said.



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

Ivanka Trump, the daughter of President Donald Trump, and husband, Jared Kushner, senior adviser to the president, attend a news conference at the White House in March 2017.

Roles reduced, Kushner and Ivanka Trump are facing an uncertain fate

By JONATHAN LEMIRE
AND CATHERINE LUCY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — They spent their first year in Washington as an untouchable White House power couple, commanding expansive portfolios, outlasting rivals and enjoying unmatched access to the president. But Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump have undergone a swift, stunning reckoning of late, their powers restricted, their enemies emboldened and their future in the West Wing uncertain.

Kushner, long the second-most-powerful man in the West Wing, is under siege. President Donald Trump's son-in-law has lost influential White House allies. He remains under the shadow of the Russia probe and has seen his business dealings come under renewed scrutiny. He has been stripped of his top security clearance, raising questions how he can successfully advance his ambitious agenda — including achieving Midwest peace, a goal that has eluded presidents for generations.

Kushner's most powerful patron, the president himself, has wavered recently on whether his daughter and son-in-law belong in the White House anymore.

A frustrated Trump has griped about the wave of bad headlines generated by probes into Kush-

ner's business dealings and the status of his security clearance, according to two people familiar with the president's thinking but not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations. The president also has wondered aloud if the couple would be better off returning home to New York.

At the same time, though, Trump has said he believes many of the attacks against Kushner are unfair and has lamented that the couple are going through such a turbulent time, according to the two people close to the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly about Trump's private comments.

"I think he's been treated very unfairly," Trump said late last month. "He's a high-quality person."

A week ago, Kushner's security clearance level was downgraded, leaving White House aides to wonder just how many indignities Kushner and Ivanka Trump are willing to suffer. Even if recent events and revelations don't trigger a departure, they have demonstrated that the West Wing clout of "Javanka," as the couple is often referred to, is a far cry from what it once was.

Since taking office last year, Chief of Staff John Kelly, the retired Marine general hired to bring order to Trump's chaotic

West Wing, has prioritized creating formal lines of authority and decision-making. Kushner resisted efforts to formalize his role — which early in the administration made him something of a shadow secretary of state — and he has grown frustrated with the chief of staff's attempts to restrict the couple's access to the president.

The couple perceive Kelly's crackdown on security clearances as a direct shot at them, according to White House aides and outside advisers. But one White House official disputed that account, suggesting that Kushner welcomed Kelly's efforts to organize the West Wing, allowing him to more singularly focus on his portfolio.

Kelly, in turn, has been angered by what he views as the couple's freelancing. He blames them for changing Trump's mind at the last minute and questions exactly what they do all day, according to one White House official and an outside ally. Kushner prevailed in previous power struggles within the White House, including one against former chief strategist Steve Bannon, but allies of the president on the outside openly cheered the power couple's weakened position.

"Only a son-in-law could withstand this sort of exposure and not be fired," said Jennifer Palmieri, former communications director for President Barack Obama.

NATION



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Donald Trump listens during a meeting with steel and aluminum executives Thursday in Washington.

President links tariff relief to NAFTA talks

BY ZEKE MILLER
AND KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Monday said Canada and Mexico got no relief from his new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports unless a “new and fair” free trade agreement is signed.

The Trump administration says the tariffs are necessary to preserve the American industries — and that doing so is a national security imperative. But Trump’s latest tweets suggest he’s also using the upcoming tariffs as leverage in ongoing talks to revise the North American Free Trade Agreement. The latest round of a nearly yearlong renegotiation effort is concluding this week in Mexico City.

The tariffs will be made official in the next two weeks, White House officials said Monday, as the administration defended the protectionist decision from critics in Washington and overseas.

Speaking on “Fox and Friends” Monday, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro said, “25 percent on steel, and the 10 percent on aluminum, no country exclusions — firm line in the sand.”

Trump’s pronouncement last week that he would impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, roiled markets and rankled allies. The president appeared unbowed Sunday, as he tweeted that American “Steel and Aluminum industries are dead. Sorry, it’s time for a change!”

The across-the-board action breaks with the recommendation of the Pentagon, which pushed for more targeted tariffs on metals imports from countries such as China and warned that a wide-ranging move would jeopardize national security partnerships. But Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, whose agency oversees

reviews of the industries that recommended the tariffs, said Sunday ABC’s “This Week” that Trump is “talking about a fairly broad brush.”

Republican South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham said the sweeping action would let China “off the hook,” adding the tariffs would drive a wedge between the U.S. and its allies.

“China wins when we fight with Europe,” he said on CBS’ “Face the Nation.” “China wins when the American consumer has higher prices because of tariffs that don’t affect Chinese behavior.”

British Prime Minister Theresa May raised her “deep concern” at the tariff announcement in a phone call with Trump on Sunday. May’s office said she noted that multilateral action was the only way to resolve the problem of global overcapacity.”

Trump’s GOP allies on Capitol Hill have little use for the tariff approach. They argue that other industries that rely on steel and aluminum products will suffer. The cost of new appliances, cars and buildings will rise if the president follows through, they warn, and other nations could retaliate. The end result could erode the president’s base of support with rural America and even the blue-collar workers the president says he is trying to help.

“There is always retaliation, and typically a lot of these countries single out agriculture when they do that. So, we’re very concerned,” said Sen. John Thune, R-S.D.

Gov. Scott Walker, R-Wis., asked the administration to reconsider its stance. He said American companies could move their operations abroad and not face retaliatory tariffs.

The exact opposite outcome of the administration’s stated objective, which is to protect American jobs,” Walker said.

Trump expresses openness to talks with North Korea

BY BRIAN BENNETT
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump expressed new openness to talks with North Korea over its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, saying “we will be meeting” as he delivered what was supposed to be a comedic speech at a lighthearted annual gala dinner hosted by Washington journalists.

Officials said later that no meeting has been scheduled, but Trump’s apparently unscripted aside seemed to indicate a willingness to negotiate with the government of Kim Jong Un, who Trump has taunted as “little Rocket Man” and threatened with “fire and fury like the world has never seen.”

Trump delivered a self-deprecating punchline during a rambling speech Saturday night in front of more than 600 journalists and guests at the Gridiron Dinner at the Renaissance Washington Hotel saying: “I won’t rule out direct talks with Kim Jong Un; I just won’t. As far as the risk of dealing with a madman is concerned, that’s his problem, not mine.”

But then he appeared to depart from his written remarks to describe an overture that Pyongyang has extended to Washington, apparently through the government in South Korea.

“By the way, a couple days ago they said, ‘We would like to talk,’ and I said, ‘So would we, but you have to de-nuke, you have to de-nuke,’” Trump said.

The Trump administration has publicly insisted that North Korea give up its nuclear weapons program before talks could begin, a demand Pyongyang on Sunday dismissed as “preposterous.”

In his comments, however, Trump hinted he may be considering other options, saying “maybe positive things are happening” and “we will be meeting, and we’ll see anything positive happens.”

A U.S. official said Washington would insist that any talks should focus on denuclearization, but that it would not demand Pyongyang disarm first or set other preconditions to meet. For its part, North Korea wants international recognition of its role as a nuclear power, a position the U.S. and its allies say they cannot accept.

But some progress appeared in sight. On Sunday, North Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed U.S. demands that it give up its nuclear arsenal. But it also said a position the Washington was possible and that it hopes to find a “diplomatic and peaceful solution” to the conflict.

Trump believes his “maximum

Trump trades jokes with media at annual dinner

BY EMILY HEIL
The Washington Post

On Saturday night, President Donald Trump was not having the sort of evening he prefers. For starters, he was dressed in white-tie finery, not the golf-ready khakis he favors on weekends. He was surrounded by the very members of the mainstream media he routinely derides. And his entertainment was skits and musical acts, some of which poked fun at him.

Nothing about Trump’s attendance at the annual dinner of the Gridiron Club, an elite group of 65 top Washington journalists, made a lot of sense. But there was at the Renaissance Washington Hotel for the club’s 133rd annual gathering, accompanied by first lady Melania Trump. Presidents since William McKinley have dutifully shown up at the Gridiron’s formal clambake, which has evolved into an evening of goofy entertainment by the journalists and jokey monologues by a prominent Republican and Democrat, and a roast-like speech by the president.

Trump gamely turned some of the controversies plaguing his administration into laugh lines. Of the turmoil currently rolling the White House staff, he offered this quip: “So many people have been leaving the

White House,” he said. “It’s invigorating since you want turnover. I like chaos. It really is good. Who’s going to be the next to leave? Steve Miller, or Melania?” (Miller is one of his senior advisers; Melania, of course, is his wife.) Ba-dum-dum.

He joked about Jeff Sessions, his attorney general, with whom he’s been locked into a public feud

over his top lawyer’s decision to excuse himself from the investigation into Russian influence in

the 2016 election. Trump told the crowd that he’d offered a ride to the dinner to Sessions, “but he recused himself.” Sessions was also at the dinner.

Other than the journalists whom the president dubbed “enemies of the state,” there were friendlier faces in the crowd of about 660, including Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin; Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross; Trump’s daughter Ivanka Trump and son-in-law, Jared Kushner; White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders; and National Security Agency director Michael Rogers.

pressure” campaign to isolate North Korea from the world economy through trade, banking and shipping restrictions has made Kim more willing to engage with South Korea, and ultimately with Washington.

In recent weeks, Trump has repeatedly claimed credit for North Korea’s decision to send a delegation to the Olympic Games and have its athletes walk with South Korean athletes in the opening ceremony, although leaders in Seoul and Pyongyang arranged the episode themselves.

North Korea surprised U.S. intelligence officials last year by making rapid advances in its weapons programs. It tested intercontinental ballistic missiles that for the first time appeared capable of reaching the continental United States, and it tested a ther-

monuclear device in September that was far more powerful than earlier versions.

U.S. officials say it is only a matter of time, perhaps less than a year, before Pyongyang masters the ability to build a bomb small and robust enough to be launched atop a long-range ballistic missile and thus pose a direct threat to the United States.

The Trump administration has tried to push China and Russia to further cut trade with North Korea, pressured other countries to cut diplomatic ties with Pyongyang, and added new banking and human rights sanctions against Kim’s government.

In addition, Trump has asked the Pentagon to update U.S. military options to prevent North Korea from launching a nuclear strike.



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NATION

Raising their profile, looking outward

Yemeni immigrants focus on future in US amid war back home

By JEFF KAROUB
Associated Press

DEARBORN, Mich. — Ibrahim Alhasbani is like generations of Middle Eastern immigrants in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn. He fled war, came with dreams and worked for others until he could strike out on his own.

Now, like an increasing number of people from Yemen who have come to the United States, he sees a long-term future outside the country he left and seeks to bring aspects of his native country into America.

"Here, you build, over there, you have memories," said Alhasbani, owner of Qahwah House, a cafe that serves coffee made from beans harvested on his family's farm in Yemen's mountains. "I live here, so this is the main thing. This is what's going to help first build my career, build my business ... and help the people over there."

Yemenis have been coming to the U.S. for more than a century — especially since the 1960s — but in recent years, they have been planting stronger roots, raising their profile and looking outward — opening upscale restaurants and cafes and running for political office. And in cases like Alhasbani, they are making Yemeni culture a key part of the business proposition.

It's a path that's not unusual for first- and second-generation immigrants in the U.S. For Yemenis, the shift is also a reaction to chaos in their homeland, where a devastating civil war has killed more than 10,000 people and displaced 2 million.

"People are coming here and bringing their resources here," said Sally Howell, an author and associate professor of Arab American Studies at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. "In the past, they weren't really committed to here. Now, the situation has

been so bad in Yemen for so long, they're doing what other refugees and exiles do: They're acknowledging their future is here."

The highest U.S. population of Yemenis is in the Detroit area, where Syrian and Lebanese immigrants had already settled and became more prominent in business. Unlike their Arab neighbors, many Yemeni men came alone and didn't have relatives follow them, so they were more likely to go back and forth between the U.S. and their homeland.



"We're not going back to Yemen like we did before."

Rasheed Alnozili
publisher of The Yemeni American News

"We're not going back to Yemen like we did before," said Rasheed Alnozili, publisher of The Yemeni American News. "We learn from Lebanese. They built here then they built there. We made a mistake: we built there, now we built here. ... We learned late, but we're still in process."

Areas of New York City, San Francisco, Chicago and Buffalo, N.Y., also have Yemeni communities. About 43,000 people of Yemeni ancestry are in the U.S., according to a 2015 census survey.

However, advocates say the number is much higher because of historical undercounting and has significantly increased since that last survey because of deteriorating conditions in Yemen, which fell into chaos following its

2011 Arab Spring uprising that removed longtime autocrat Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Then, in September 2014, Shiite rebels known as Houthis seized the Yemeni capital of Sanaa after driving out the internationally backed government of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. A Saudi-led coalition backing Hadi has been fighting to defeat the Iran-backed Houthis since March 2015.

Dearborn and the Detroit enclave of Hamtramck have several sit-down restaurants specializing in Yemeni cuisine. In Hamtramck, where a Yemeni serves on the majority-Muslim City Council, there are also shops devoted to Yemeni sweets and sub sandwiches.

"The real difference today is that Yemeni are representing Yemen to the public, not just having ethnic Yemeni restaurants in tightly knit Yemeni enclaves," Howell said.

At Qahwah House, the goal is not only to serve Yemeni-style coffee, with its alluring tastes of cardamom and ginger, but also to impart information about Yemen's history and culture. The country is, as the National Coffee Association notes, where coffee cultivation and trade began, though Ethiopia boasts of being the birthplace of the discovery of coffee.

"That's why I want to ... be like a messenger for my country — give the right picture about the people over there and the coffee," said Alhasbani, whose brother was blinded when a bomb exploded near his family's home several years ago.

In Hamtramck, Abraham Aiyash, a first-generation Yemeni who is running as a Democrat for state Senate, is inspired by those who have struggled and recalls an uncle who died last year in Yemen after an airstrike. "I'll always remember that in the work that I do ... I'll be reminded that people before me kind of had to toil and sweat to make this possible."



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Ibrahim Alhasbani, owner of Qahwah House, pours coffee as he prepares a dessert in Dearborn, Mich.

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NATION

Snow slows California's plunge back into drought

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Welcome drifts of fresh snow await California's water managers on their late-winter survey of the vital Sierra Nevada snowpack Monday after a massive winter storm slowed the state's plunge back into drought.

The storm piled snow by the foot in the mountains, forcing Department of Water Resources officials to postpone the measurement for a few days.

"We didn't feel like it would be safe" for water officials and news crews who turn out for the monthly winter assessments of Sierra snowpack to make the trek during last week's storm, said Chris Orrock, a spokesman for state water officials.

The storm brought parts of California more rain in hours than they received during all of

February, typically one of the wettest months of the year. In Southern California, the storm brought what was only the second significant rainfall of the past year to some areas, prompting new evacuations after rare rains earlier this year triggered deadly mudslides.

Most importantly, it brought copious snow to the Sierra. Run-off from melted snow through the spring historically supplies Californians with one-third of their water, although scientists say climate change is altering that.

Before the storm, California had accumulated less than a quarter of its normal snowpack for the year. State officials expected the storm to double that, Orrock said, bringing the state to about half the historical average for snowpack

by this point in March, typically California's last, best chance for wet winter storms.

California emerged only last year from a historic five-year drought that forced mandatory water conservation for cities and towns, dried wells and killed millions of trees in a devastating period for wildlife.

Near-record rain last year snapped the drought, only to have this winter's rainy season land as a dud.

By February, nearly half the state — all of it in Southern California, home to more than half of residents — was back in drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The Los Angeles-based Metropolitan Water District, the country's largest urban supplier of



RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

Frank Gehrke, chief of the California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program for the Department of Water Resources, conducts a snow survey near Echo Summit, Calif., last month.

water, still plans to vote in April on increased funding for conservation programs, spokeswoman Rebecca Kimitch said.

"One storm isn't going to ... make up for what has been a very dry few months," Kimitch said.

California's rainy season is often

this kind of a cliffhanger, Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles, said last month.

The state is dependent on a handful of significant storms for its water, so things can turn around quickly, he said.



COURTESY OF JOHN MASSON/AP

David Gavitt visits the grave of his wife and two daughters in Ionia County, Mich., immediately after he was released from prison.

Mich. man cleared of murder now fighting for compensation

By Ed White

Associated Press

DETROIT — David Gavitt spent 26 years in prison for the deaths of his wife and two daughters before a prosecutor agreed that the evidence behind his arson conviction was no longer credible. The case helped inspire a Michigan law aimed at compensating the wrongfully convicted.

Yet the state now is vigorously resisting Gavitt's request for money, going so far as to question whether he's really innocent. He would qualify for more than \$1 million.

"My reaction? I don't know how to put this — anger," said Gavitt, 59, who works the midnight shift at a tub manufacturer. "It's like a slap in the face. ... I thought we lived in America, where the accused doesn't have to prove innocence. They're judging me all over again."

Gavitt's claim under Michigan's Wrongful Imprisonment Compensation Act — \$50,000 for each year in prison — would seem like a slam dunk. The evidence used to convict him was thoroughly discredited through major advances in fire science, and Ionia County prosecutor Ron Schafer in 2012 declined a second trial.

But Schafer's successor and the Michigan attorney general's office aren't convinced he should be paid.

"Although Mr. Gavitt is no longer guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of the crime charged, there certainly is circumstantial evidence that supports he is not innocent of wrongdoing," prosecutor Kyle Butler said in a letter to Attorney General Bill Schuette.

Michigan is among 32 states and the District of Columbia that provide money to people who are rebuilding their lives after being wrongfully convicted. Perjury, had evidence, sloppy police work — all have led to reversals, sometimes after decades in prison.

Gavitt was convicted of arson and murder in 1986 in a tragedy that stunned the small town of Ionia, 130 miles northwest of Detroit. His wife, Angie, and their daughters, ages 3 and 11, died. Wearing only jeans, Gavitt was rushed to a hospital where he spent weeks recovering from severe burns.

He insisted the fire in the living room was an accident. But experts testified that burn patterns in the living room were typical of an intentional fire and that traces of gasoline were detected.

Tyson's former Ohio home becoming house of worship

Associated Press

WARREN, Ohio — A garishly appointed Ohio mansion that heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson once called home and subsequently fell into disrepair is being converted into a house of worship.

The Living Word Sanctuary Church has been cleaning up the property in Trumbull County's Southington Township, roughly 45 miles southeast of Cleveland, since the 25,000-square-foot mansion was donated to the church several years ago.

"The property had been untouched for 10 years," Living Word Pastor Nicholas DeJacomo told the Warren Tribune-Chronicle. "You had so much grass, you could have sold it for hay."

The mansion is a considerable step up. The church has been holding services at a YMCA. The sanctuary the church hopes to have ready by year's end is an area where Tyson and his guests splashed in an indoor pool. A four-bay garage is being turned into youth classrooms and a nursery. Tall steel cages where Tyson kept four tigers have been dismantled for a pavilion.

The second-floor master suite featured mirror-covered walls and ceiling, a whirlpool spa and two bathrooms.

"We heard there were some crazy parties here," DeJacomo said. "We will turn this into a room where women can get ready for a wedding."

Church offices and meeting rooms are being built on the second floor.

It's unclear which of the mansion's design features can be attributed to Tyson or the previous owner. It was built in 1979. Tyson bought in 1989 for \$300,000 and sold it 10 years later for \$1.3 million to Paul Monea, an informal entrepreneur best known for marketing Tae-Bo exercise videos.

Monea was sentenced in 2007 to 13 years in federal prison for money laundering. The mansion was bought in 2010 for \$600,000 and then donated to the church for a tax write-off.

The church's up-front investment was \$50,000 to clear back taxes.



MARK A. STAHL/AP

Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson pumps his fist in the air during his weigh-in at the Chevrolet Centre in Youngstown, Ohio, in October 2006.

"The property had been untouched for 10 years. You had so much grass, you have sold it for hay."

Nicholas DeJacomo
Living Word pastor

Tyson returned to the mansion in 1995 after serving time in Indiana for rape and lived there while training at promoter Don King's camp in nearby Orwell, according to the newspaper. Tyson befriended neighbors during training runs and played basketball with kids on his court.

People stop by hoping for a look inside Tyson's former home, DeJacomo said. He said the mansion "got dropped in our lap."

"I tell everyone, 'This was meant for us.'"

WORLD

Cardinal's accusers testify in Australian court

By Rod McGuirk
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — The most senior Catholic Church leader to be charged with sexual abuse came close to confronting his accusers on Monday in a video-linked Australian court hearing to test the strength of the prosecution's case.

Cardinal George Pell's alleged victims began testifying in the Melbourne Magistrates Court against Pope Francis' former finance minister in testimony that cannot be made public.

The complainants, who cannot be identified, are avoiding the intense media scrutiny focused on the cramped courtroom and the company of their alleged abuser by giving their evidence via a video connection from an undisclosed location. The number of alleged victims has not been made public, and their testimony is scheduled to continue for up to two weeks.



ASANKA BRENDON RATNAYAKE/AP

Australian Cardinal George Pell, front, leaves the Melbourne Magistrate Court on Monday.

The 76-year-old Australian cardinal has denied any wrongdoing and has foreshadowed pleas of not guilty if the committal hearing

is scheduled to run as long as a month finds there is sufficient evidence to warrant a jury trial.

Pell was charged in June with

sexually abusing multiple people in his Australian home state of Victoria. The details of the allegations have yet to be released to the public, though police have described the charges as "historical" sexual assault offenses — meaning the alleged crimes occurred decades ago.

One of the charges was withdrawn last week because the accused had recently died.

Pell's lawyer Robert Richter did not object to the complainants appearing in court on a television screen Monday rather than in person.

When Pell last lived in Melbourne, he was archbishop of Australia's second-largest city. He progressed to archbishop of Australia's biggest city, Sydney, before moving to the Vatican as a prefect of the church's Economy Ministry in 2014. He intends to return to that job once the criminal charges are resolved.

The case places both the car-

dinal and the pope in potentially perilous territory.

For Pell, the charges are a threat to his freedom, his reputation and his career. For Francis, they are a threat to his credibility, given that he famously promised a "zero tolerance" policy for sex abuse in the church.

Advocates for abuse victims have long rallied against Francis' decision to appoint Pell to the high-ranking position in the first place.

When Pell was promoted in 2014, he was already facing allegations that he had mishandled cases of clergy abuse during his time as archbishop.

So far, Francis has withheld judgment of Pell, saying he wants to wait for Australian justice to run its course. And he did not force the cardinal to resign.

Pell said he intends to continue his work as a prefect of the church's Economy Ministry once the case is resolved.

Populist, anti-EU parties surge in Italian elections, but no majority

By Frances D'Emilio
And Colleen Barry
Associated Press

ROME — A rival pair of populist and stridently anti-European Union political forces surged in Italy's parliamentary election at the expense of the country's traditional political powers, but neither gained enough support to govern alone, preliminary results showed Monday.

With no faction winning a clear majority and a hung Parliament expected, the results confirmed that negotiations to form a new government that can win a confidence vote will be long and fraught. Financial markets opened lower and were volatile in early trading Monday.

Preliminary results released by Italy's Interior Ministry showed the center-right coalition winning about 37 percent of the parliamentary vote and the 5-Star

Movement getting about 32 percent, with the center-left coalition far behind with 23 percent.

In an upset, the results showed the right-wing, anti-immigrant and euroskeptic League party of Matteo Salvini surpassing the longtime anchor of the center-right, the Forza Italia party of ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi. According to the partial results, the League captured around 18 percent of the vote, while Forza Italia had less than 14 percent.

With the anti-establishment 5-Stars the highest vote-getter of any single party, the results confirmed the defeat of the two main political forces that have dominated Italian politics for decades — Forza Italia and the center-left Democrats — and the surging of populist and right-wing, euroskeptic forces that have burst onto the European scene.

The 5-Star Movement considers itself an internet-based democra-

cy, not a party, and views established parties as a parasitic caste. Since its birth in 2009 under the auspices of comic Beppe Grillo, the 5-Stars have attracted legions of mostly young Italians who are facing few job prospects and are fed up with Italy's traditional politicians.

The League, which captured only 4 percent of the national vote in the last general election in 2013, was particularly strong in the north, its traditional base. In Veneto, where it won 11 percent in 2013, it captured around 48 percent this time around.

It will now be up to President Sergio Mattarella, a constitutional scholar, to sound out the political parties to determine who has the best chances of forming a government. The head of state has a ceremonial position that is meant to be above the political fray.

Shell, Eni go on trial in Nigerian bribery case

Associated Press

MILAN — A corporate bribery trial billed as the biggest in history opened Monday against the Shell and Eni oil companies as well as former and current executives, all charged in a \$1.1 billion scandal to win control of one of Nigeria's most lucrative oil blocks.

The size of the two oil companies makes the trial the biggest, according to anti-corruption campaigners, who also say it is unprecedented that Eni's current CEO, Claudio Descalzi, remains in his post while he faces such serious charges.

"We have never seen a sitting CEO of an oil major go on trial for bribery," said Barnaby Face, a campaigner with activist group Global Witness.

The trial was later postponed until May 14 for

technical reasons. The Nigerian government and four nongovernmental organizations, including Global Witness, submitted requests to be considered damaged parties in the proceedings, which would allow them to participate in the prosecution.

Descalzi is one of 13 individuals charged in the case involving the 2011 purchase of the OPL245 block. Other defendants include his predecessor, Paolo Scaroni; two former top Shell executives; a former Nigerian oil minister; and a series of middlemen and advisers. The companies themselves are also corporate defendants.

Milan prosecutors allege that \$520 million of the \$1.1 billion paid into an escrow account was converted into cash and distributed as bribes, while several hundred million more went to a former oil minister.



SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL BLUE HOUSE, YONHAP/AP

Kim Jong Chol, second from right, vice chairman of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party Central Committee, talks with the South Korean delegation in Pyongyang, North Korea, on Monday.

North Korean leader hosts South's envoys in rare visit

By KANGA KONG
Bloomberg

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held talks with top aides to South Korea's Moon Jae-in in Pyongyang on Monday, the president's office said, in the first meeting between the leader of the isolated nation and officials from Seoul since he took power in 2011.

National Security Office head Chung Eui-yong and National Intelligence Service chief Suh Hoon were in the North Korean capital to seek to persuade Kim to start talks with the U.S. on denuclearization and stave off a potential conflict over his nuclear program. The envoys also planned to discuss with Pyongyang officials the release of three Korean-Americans detained in North Korea.

Kim hosted the envoys for a dinner that started at 6 p.m. Seoul time, a spokesman for Moon told a briefing. The delegation arrived around 2:30 p.m.

The South Korean envoys are due to travel to Washington later this week to discuss the results of

their discussions with the Trump administration. Their two-day trip follows a visit by Kim's sister to South Korea last month, when she invited Moon to North Korea to meet her brother for what would be the first inter-Korean summit for 11 years.

The meeting "shows Kim Jong Un wants to achieve his inter-Korean objectives laid out in his New Year's Day address," said Duyeon Kim, visiting senior research fellow at the Korean Peninsula Future Forum in Seoul. "It places much importance on the envoys' visit while continuing his peace offensive tactics toward the South and portraying his country as normal, modern and peace-loving."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters in a regular briefing in Beijing earlier Monday that China hopes the interaction between the two Koreas could bring about talks between North Korea and the U.S. He added that China stands ready to play a positive role to realize denuclearization and achieve lasting peace on the peninsula.

WORLD

China pledges growth; embraces term limit end

By JOE McDONALD
AND GILLIAN WONG
Associated Press

BEIJING — China's government pledged Monday to deliver robust growth, pursue advanced technology and boost military spending while urging the public to embrace President Xi Jinping's rule as its ceremonial legislature prepared for changes to allow Xi to stay in power indefinitely.

The plan to end constitutional limits on Xi's term as president has overshadowed the meeting of the National People's Congress, which usually is used to showcase economic initiatives and plans for social programs and other government work.

In a nearly two-hour speech to the legislature, Premier Li Keqiang did not mention the scrapping of term limits but emphasized the primacy of Xi, 64, and the ruling Communist Party he leads in all aspects of Chinese life.

The slide toward one-man rule under Xi, already China's most dominant figure of recent decades, has fueled concern that Beijing is eroding efforts to guard against the excesses of autocratic leadership and make economic regulation more stable and predictable.

The president's office has few powers, but Xi's posts as ruling party general secretary and chairman of the commission that controls the party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army, already have no term limit. By tradition since the early 1990s, one person has

held all three posts at the same time.

"If it gets approved, you can describe his attempt to abolish term limits as really to make China medieval again, not to make China great again," said Warren Sun, a historian of the Chinese Communist Party at Australia's Monash University.

Chinese officials have defended the end of Xi's term limits as necessary to ensure continuity as Beijing undertakes a sprawling long-range agenda aimed at making state industry competitive and productive, developing profitable high-tech industry, reducing poverty and cleaning up China's battered environment.

In line with this agenda, Li set this year's growth target at around 6.5 percent, which would be among the world's strongest.

It comes amid a campaign to nurture self-sustaining growth based on domestic consumption and to rein in surging debt that prompted ratings agencies to cut Beijing's government credit rating last year.

Private sector analysts have questioned if Beijing can achieve such strong growth without infusions of bank lending and government spending, which would set back its reforms.

Last year's growth came in at 6.9 percent, but that was supported by a boom in bank lending and real estate sales that regulators are trying to rein in amid concern about debt that has soared to the equivalent of 270 percent of annual economic output.

Li promised progress on an array of politically challenging plans, including the restruc-



ANDY WONG/AP

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang delivers a work report at the opening session of the annual National People's Congress on Monday.

turing or bankruptcy of "zombie enterprises," money-losing but politically favored companies that are kept afloat by loans from government banks.

The move to consolidate even more power under Xi comes as foreign governments, already wary of China's expanding influence abroad, are closely watching shifts toward greater authoritarianism.

Chinese investments abroad in technology and banking are under closer scrutiny, while foreign companies and governments complain that Beijing hampers access to its markets in violation of its free-trade commitments.

Legislators also are due to endorse the appointment of economic and other officials picked by the party. That is widely expected to include the promotion of Xi's top economic adviser to a post overseeing reform.

Carlos the Jackal back on trial for Paris attack

Associated Press

PARIS — The Venezuelan extremist known as Carlos the Jackal went back on trial Monday for a deadly 1974 grenade attack on a Paris shopping arcade.

A Paris court convicted Carlos, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, last year and handed him a life sentence.

He appealed — even though he's already serving two life sentences for murders and attacks he was convicted of perpetrating or organizing in the 1970s and 1980s on behalf of the Palestinian cause, or of communist revolution.

One of his lawyers, Isabelle Coutant-Peyre, said Carlos hadn't been able to see the case dossier for the appeals trial, and might ask for a delay in Monday's opening proceedings.

Carlos, now 68, has long denied involvement in the attack on the Drugstore Publicist shopping center in the French capital's Latin Quarter, which killed two people and injured 34.

The case was initially dismissed for lack of evidence. Carlos, the only defendant in the original trial, was found guilty of throwing the grenade.

Ramirez Sanchez was once the world's most-wanted fugitive before intelligence agents captured him in Sudan in 1994 and smuggled him to France in a sack.

German equality boss wants change to anthem

Associated Press

BERLIN — A German equality official reportedly wants to change the country's national anthem to make it more gender-neutral, including by removing a reference to "the Fatherland."

The Weekly Bild am Sonntag reported that Kristin Rose-Moehring suggested replacing the word "Vaterland" with "Heimatland," which roughly translates as homeland. The newspaper reported Sunday that Rose-Moehring also proposed replacing another male-specific word, "brotherly," with "courageous."

Rose-Moehring, who speaks for the 25 equality officials in Germany's top federal departments, suggested making the change on March 8, International Women's Day.

Austria and Canada have removed gender-specific terms from their anthems in recent years.

Germany officially cut its national anthem to only the third stanza of August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben's lyrics in 1991. The Nazis favored the first stanza, which declares "Germany above all."

China to boost defense spending in 2018

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN
Associated Press

BEIJING — China's defense budget will rise 8.1 percent to \$173 billion this year as the country prepares to launch its second aircraft carrier, integrate stealth fighters into its air force and field an array of advanced missiles able to attack air and sea targets at vast distances.

The figure released in a report Monday to the ceremonial National People's Congress is an increase in the growth rate from last year, when Finance Ministry officials said the budget was rising 7 percent to \$151 billion.

Years of double-digit percentage growth have given China the world's second-largest defense budget after the United States.

"We will stick to the Chinese path in strengthening our armed forces, advance all aspects of military training and be well-prepared," Premier Li Keqiang said as he read a report to delegates at the Great Hall of the People.

China's defense spending as a share of GDP and the budget remains lower than that of other major nations, Zhang Yesui, a spokesman for the legislature, said Sunday.

This year's defense budget comes to about 1.3 percent of last year's GDP of \$12.4 trillion.

Noting that this year's increase was roughly the same as last year's when adjusted for inflation, Shanghai military expert Ni Lexiong said China was seeking to avoid a full-on arms race based



KIN CHEUNG/AP

China will increase its defense budget by 8 percent to \$173 billion this year as the country prepares to expand its military assets.

on quantity of weapons, choosing instead to invest in high-tech systems and training.

China's navy has been training rigorously on the Liaoning aircraft carrier, which was bought from Ukraine and heavily refurbished. In April, it launched a 50,000-ton carrier built entirely on its own based on the Ukrainian model.

It will join the improved Type 093B Shang class nuclear-powered attack submarine equipped with anti-sub missiles — considered only slightly inferior to the U.S. Navy's mainstay Los Angeles class boats — and the Type 055 guided-missile destroyers

at the forefront of China's naval technology.

Such vessels stand to alter the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific, where the U.S. Navy has long been dominant and regional rivals such as Japan and India are stepping up their presence. Most navy ships already have anti-ship cruise missiles with longer ranges than those of their U.S. counterparts.

China's navy is also relying on numerical superiority to boost its influence.

In the air, China last month said it had begun equipping combat units with its J-20 stealth fighter jet, the country's answer to fifth-

generation jets such as the U.S. F-22 and F-35. No less impressive is China's missile technology, particularly the DF-21D, which is built to take out an aircraft carrier, and a new air-to-air missile with a range of some 249 miles that could attack assets such as early warning aircraft and refueling tankers crucial to U.S. Air Force operations.

In a further display of sophistication, China said in early February that it had successfully tested a mid-course anti-missile defense system, deploying technology similar to that used to destroy a defunct Chinese satellite in 2007.

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OPINION

Putin, el-Sissi 'put on the show' again

By JACKSON DIEHL

The Washington Post

With Western democracy on the defensive, China's Xi Jinping is aggressively advancing a new model for human governance in the 21st century: personal dictatorship backed by nationalism, state-directed capitalism and a security apparatus empowered by cutting-edge technologies. There's no pretense of evolution toward democracy or even the rule of law. On the contrary, Xi explicitly casts his regime as an alternative that "offers a new option for other countries."

Among the world leaders seemingly most likely to embrace this neo-totalitarianism are Russia's Vladimir Putin and Egypt's Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, both of whom have consolidated personal power on a platform of nationalism. So it's interesting that both Putin and el-Sissi are putting on presidential elections this month.

Sure, these are not real elections. They are Potemkin pageants that will award the two strongest overwhelming victories, thanks in part to the exclusion of all serious opponents. The only suspense about the March 18 vote in Russia, or the ballot in Egypt concluding 10 days later, will be about the abstention rate, because opposition leaders in both countries are calling for boycotts.

Still, it's telling that Putin and el-Sissi feel compelled to engage in something resembling a democratic exercise and even to campaign for votes. Putin has been touring factories and last Thursday delivered a fiery nationalist speech reeking of Trump-esque populism. For his part, el-Sissi ginned up a new, made-for-television military campaign in the Sinai Peninsula last month, and last week his chief prosecutor launched a broadside against an always-popular target, the foreign news media.

Why bother? "I think the answer is ob-

These are not real elections. They are Potemkin pageants.

vious: legitimacy," said Stanford University's Larry Diamond, an expert on global democratic trends. "There is still enough resonance today of the democracy principle so that leaders like [el-Sissi and Putin] feel the need to show that they have won in a superficially competitive election, that they are the people's choice."

Of course, Russia and Egypt started their march toward 21st-century autocracy from a different place than China. Both once had relatively free elections — Egypt in 2011 and Russia as recently as Putin's first presidential run, in 2000. It's not easy to renounce that tradition completely, or overnight. So Putin and el-Sissi have acted by increments, gradually eliminating the space for opposition parties, civil society groups and critical media.

Four years ago el-Sissi allowed a genuine opponent, leftist Hamdeen Sabahi, to run against him. This year his four potentially serious challengers, including two former senior military officers, were jailed or threatened with prosecution to keep them off the ballot.

Putin's propagandists claim that he enjoys overwhelming support from Russians, yet the new czar also no longer allows himself to be tested by real competition. A decade ago, opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was permitted to run for president against Vladimir Putin. Medvedev, now Nemtsov is dead — assassinated outside the Kremlin — while the country's most popular dissident, Alexei Navalny, is banned from this year's vote.

Xi has locked in his right to rule for life by moving to abolish the two-term limit on China's presidency. But neither Putin nor el-Sissi has yet decided on that step. Officially, Putin will be ineligible for election after his next term expires in 2024, while

el-Sissi said as recently as November that he would not try to lift Egypt's two-term limit, which could force him from office in 2022.

Perhaps their lack of nerve is a testament to the unique carrot and stick of Xi's regime: a still robustly growing economy, combined with a domestic security service that is adopting tools such as artificial intelligence and facial recognition. Already, in China, technology exists that can detect train passengers breaking minor rules and punish them with reductions in their "social credit" scores.

It's hard to imagine Egypt achieving the technological competence to impose such citizen-by-citizen control anytime soon. Putin's agents could do it, but that would break his implicit pact with Russians — to leave them alone in exchange for political passivity. Meanwhile, neither Putin nor el-Sissi can offer his people the prospect of steadily improving living standards.

What all this suggests is that Xi-type totalitarianism is unlikely to spread anytime soon as a full-fledged alternative to liberal democracy. Liberal values may be in retreat in much of the world, and even established democracies are on the defensive. But the appeal of the popular vote remains strong enough that even the most repressive countries are unlikely to abandon it.

Diamond said that what's true of Egypt and Russia is also holding across Central Asia, the Caucasus and Africa. "I guess the good news is that they still need to put on the show," he said. "The bad news is that it is an increasingly hollow and fraudulent show, and yet they are getting away with it."

Jackson Diehl is deputy editorial page editor for The Washington Post.

Parkland school shooting claims 1 more victim

mander who, in the face of a naval engagement in World War II, was unable to find the courage to alter his warship's course to confront the enemy. Instead he steamed away from the battle.

The captain then retired to his cabin and killed himself with a handgun.

This is the sort of haunting, life-destroying guilt that Peterson faces. Sometimes people simply freeze in the face of danger. No one really knows how he or she will react.

But if Peterson failed to do his duty, so have many others, including our culture as a whole, which continues to ask first responders to engage shooters by whom they are completely outgunned.

Peterson was armed with a pistol, which is not much for a semiautomatic AR-15 with a high-capacity magazine. A fully automatic assault rifle (which produces a stream of bullets until the trigger is released) can deliver more firepower, but the semiautomatic (one bullet fired per trigger pull) is an extremely destructive combat weapon.

In fact, The New York Times noted recently that for decades, American troops have been trained to operate their assault weapons in semiautomatic mode rather than automatic mode.

Analysis of the Florida shooting indicates that Cruz discharged his semiautomatic weapon at a rate of 1½ rounds per second, several times faster than American infantrymen are trained to fire. And the AR-15's standard magazine holds up to 30 rounds.

In short, we're asking a lot of Peterson to take on this kind of firepower with a standard service pistol. And he couldn't have known how many shooters were involved. Would you have the courage to enter the building?

Trump, better known for his self-aggrandizing imagination than his empathy, was confident: "I really believe I'd run in there even if I didn't have a weapon."

But like the students at Parkland, I call BS. Trump has no idea what he would do in the same circumstance, nor do any of us. In fact, Trump's history suggests that he's more of a bluffer than a fighter, more inclined to criticize people who have demonstrated their courage, such as Sen. John McCain and former Secretary of State John Kerry, than to perform acts of bravery himself.

If Trump wants to show courage, he should take on the National Rifle Association and support a ban on high-powered, military-style weapons with high-capacity magazines, both automatic and semiautomatic. Until our political leaders can muster this sort of courage, we will continue to have school shootings.

And we'll continue to ask first responders — and armed teachers — to face up to firepower that they can't match.

So Scot Peterson is one more victim of guns in our country. He will have to live with his failure to act. The rest of us have to live with our failure to act, as well.

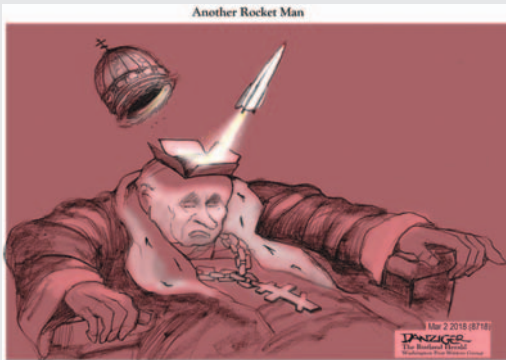
John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Georgetown, Texas.

Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



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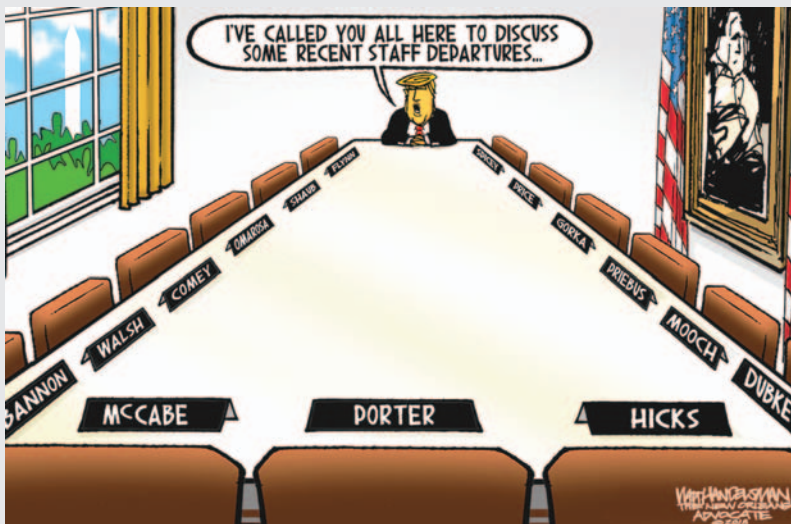
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LISA BENSON/Washington Post Writers Group



WALT HANDELSMAN/Tribune Content Agency

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman wins Keys conch contest, gets proposal

FL KEY WEST — A Florida retiree won the women's division victory in Key West's annual Conch Shell Blowing Contest — and a marriage proposal from a fellow competitor.

Mary Lou Smith impressed the judges Saturday with long blasts on the fluted, pink-lined shell which she followed with a joyous, accepting duet with Rick Race after his onstage proposal.

Judges evaluated entrants from children to seniors on the quality, novelty, duration and loudness of sounds they produced.

Man dons bulletproof vest, is fatally shot

TX HOUSTON — Houston police said a man who put on a bulletproof vest at his friends' party fired a shot at him.

Police are searching for the man who fired the fatal shot early Sunday. Investigators said forensic tests will determine if the gunshot went through the vest or struck an uncovered area.

Police believe six to eight people were attending the party.

Text for drug customer goes to deputy instead

SC SUMTER — Authorities said a man wanting to sell drugs got himself and two of his friends arrested by accidentally texting a police officer instead of a customer.

Sumter County deputies said the officer received a text about 2 p.m. Thursday offering to sell marijuana. Authorities said the deputy texted back and arranged the sale in less than three hours.

Deputies said in a statement they stopped the drug dealer's car on the way to the sale and found several bags of marijuana and people. They arrested three of four people in the car on marijuana charges.

Crossing guard charged with selling pot on job

PA SELINGSGROVE — A Pennsylvania crossing guard has been charged with selling marijuana at her post.

Kathryn Miller, 31, was arrested March 27 while working at an intersection near Selingsgrove Area High School.

Police alleged she sold marijuana to an informant four times last month, including twice while at her job.

Selingsgrove Area Superintendent Chad Cohrs told WNEP-TV that Miller has been suspended. He said she has worked as a crossing guard since 2012.

Miller was jailed on charges including delivery of a controlled substance.

Man hit by lightning: Memory 'got erased'

UT LAS VEGAS — A Utah man who was struck by lightning while playing golf said the time between being hit and waking up was a blur.

THE CENSUS

\$286K

The amount of military pension pay a recently retired county jail guard in Texas is accused of taking from the bank account of his long-deceased uncle. Federal officials allege Burnie Joseph Haynes, a detention officer for the Fort Bend Sheriff's Office until last month, stole the money from 1996 to 2016 in the form of retirement pay to Air Force veteran Joseph McKinley Wells, who died in 1996.



CASEY MOZINGO, THE GOLDSBORO (N.C.) NEWS-ARGUS/AP

Bringing the boom

Re-enactors cover their ears Saturday as a cannon is fired during a demonstration at Goldsboro Bridge Battlefield in Dudley, N.C.

KSL-TV reported that Justin Hofer, 38, a father of five, was taken to a burn trauma center in Las Vegas after he was struck Friday afternoon.

Hofer said he remembers seeing off on the first hole and then waking up Sunday at the hospital. He said it's like his "memory just got erased."

Hofer suffered burns on 20 percent of his body and will need skin grafts on his legs but said he is going to be home in St. George relatively quickly.

Trump name taken off impeachment class

CA SAN DIEGO — San Diego State University is changing the name of a class that sparked public criticism. The name of the course?

"Trump: Impachment, Remover or Conviction?"

The university announced Wednesday that it was dropping Trump's name from the title.

The course covers the history, procedures and constitutional grounds for removing presidents as well as presidential immunity. It also reviews all 19 impeachments in U.S. history.

The one-unit weekend class began Friday. It's offered to the public through the university's extended studies program.

Friars close bakery, will open a brewery

ME BUCKSPORT — Two Maine friars say they are closing down their iconic bakery to open up a brewery.

The Bangor Daily News reported Friar's Bakehouse in Bangor would close Friday after more than 18 years in operation. Franciscan Brothers Donald Paul and Kenneth Leo said they plan to open their new venture, the Friar's Brewhouse Tap Room, this month.

The brew house will be located in Bucksport, much closer to the brothers' monastery.

City's last drive-thru wedding chapel closes

NV RENO — The last drive-thru wedding chapel in Reno has heard its final vows.

The Reno Gazette-Journal reported George Flint, 83, opened the Chapel of the Bells in 1962,

and he closed its doors for good Wednesday.

His daughter, Margaret Flint, said she doesn't think there's a "novelty for the stereotypical chapel wedding anymore."

The wedding industry in western Nevada has declined. Washoe County in 1978 issued more than 36,000 marriage licenses. The county issued fewer than 8,000 last year.

Python weighs less than deer it ate

FL NAPLES — Researchers in Florida said they found an 11-foot-long, invasive Burmese python that had consumed a deer that weighed more than the snake.

The Naples Daily News reported that wildlife biologists tracking the slithering creatures in southwest Florida found one of them had eaten a white-tailed deer fawn.

Biologist Ian Bartoszek said the fawn weighed 35 pounds; the snake weighed 31.5 pounds.

Bartoszek said it was the largest python-to-prey weight difference he had measured.

Burmese pythons were brought to South Florida as pets in the

late 1970s. They were released into the wild, and have become a problematic, invasive species.

Man injured in jump inside Atlanta airport

GA ATLANTA — Authorities said a man who jumped over an upper-floor railing in an Atlanta airport was hospitalized with serious injuries.

WXIA-TV reported Wednesday that the man's jump from the second story was recorded on social media. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport Policy and Communications Director Reese McCranie said two passengers had been arguing when one became "visibly irate and belligerent."

Atlanta police spokeswoman Stephanie Brown said the man appeared to be intoxicated and began threatening other travelers outside the Terrapin Brewery in Concourse D. He jumped over the rail at airport personnel arrived at the scene.

Brown said the man was "alert, conscious and breathing" when medical staff took him away.

From wire reports

FACES



PHOTOS BY INVISION/AP

BEST PICTURE, BEST DIRECTOR: Guillermo del Toro and the cast and crew of "The Shape of Water" accept the award for best picture at the Oscars on Sunday at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. Del Toro won the Oscar for best director.

'Shape of Water' named best picture at 90th Academy Awards

BY LINDSEY BAHN
Associated Press

Held one year ago, the 90th Academy Awards would have very likely been a rose-colored nostalgia fest.

But this year, with a culture-wide reckoning over decades of sexual misconduct, a film business in decline, a volatile political climate and the fact that last year the esteemed show couldn't even manage to present its biggest award correctly, the film academy and host Jimmy Kimmel on Sunday staged a complex and sometimes incongruous dance of attempting to both honor and atone for the past.

In many ways, the show inside the Dolby Theatre went exactly as planned—scripted, tight, full of past-looking montages, forward-thinking speeches and produced to appeal to all. Presenters Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty got a best picture redo, ("What happened last year is Waterhouse under the bridge," Kimmel quipped) and 86-year-old Rita Moreno got to wear her dress from the 1962 ceremony again.

The awards also effectively skirted the awkwardness of having an accused man in the spotlight by shifting around long-held presenter traditions and having Jodie Foster and Jennifer Lawrence present the best actress award instead of Casey Affleck. Emma Stone got her Natalie Portman moment, presenting the directing award to "four men and Greta Gerwig." Activists like #MeToo creator Tarana Burke were included in a song segment. And three Harvey Weinstein accusers, Ashley Judd, Salma Hayek and Annabella Sciorra, were given a moment to themselves on stage for nothing more than the fact that they were brave enough to speak up before a hopeful video played highlighting a changing industry, post #MeToo and more diverse.

The video highlighted Greta Gerwig, the fifth woman to ever be nominated for best director, Yance Ford, the first transgender nominee for "Strong Island," Dee Rees, whose "Mudbound" scored a historic cinematographer nomination and the Pakistan-born Kumail Nanjiani, nominated for "The Big Sick."

The nominees signaled a renaissance. The winners told a slightly different story.



ACTING WINNERS: From left, Sam Rockwell, best supporting actor; Frances McDormand, best actress; Allison Janney, best supporting actress; and Gary Oldman, best actor, pose in the press room at the Oscars.



BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY: Jordan Peele won the Oscar for "Get Out."



HOST: Jimmy Kimmel speaks at the Oscars on Sunday. It was Kimmel's second time as host.

With a more diverse, more international and younger infusion of voting members into the film academy, the movie in love with movies still won the top awards. Guillermo del Toro's fantasy romance, "The Shape of Water," won best picture, director, score and production design.

"Growing up in Mexico, I thought this could never happen," del Toro said. "It happens."

The acting awards, which have been locked for three months, went to the expected winners: Frances McDormand won best actress for "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" and her co-star Sam Rockwell won for his supporting performance. Gary Oldman picked up the best actor prize for transforming into Winston Churchill in "Darkest Hour" and Allison Janney for becoming Tonya Harding's mother in "I, Tonya."

There were glimpses of progress, in Chile's "A Fantastic Woman," which starred the transgender actress Daniela Vega, won best foreign film. Disney and Pixar's celebration of Mexican culture, "Coco," took best animated feature, as well as best song for "Remember Me."

"The biggest thank you of all to the people of Mexico," said director Lee Unkrich to loud applause. "Marginalized people deserve to feel like they belong. Representation matters."

And Jordan Peele became the first African-American to win best original screenplay for his horror sensation "Get Out."

Peele said he stopped writing it "20 times." He said it would ever get made. "But I kept coming back to it because I knew if someone would let me make this movie, that people would hear it and people would see it," said Peele. "So I want to dedicate this to all the people who raised my voice and let me make this movie."

Even McDormand used her moment on stage to make a statement on behalf of women. "If I may be so honored to have all the female nominees stand with me," McDormand said. "We all have stories to tell and projects we need financed," she added, before uttering the phrase "inclusion rider," referring to actors signing contracts that mandate a film's gender and racial inclusivity.

Oscars' TV audience dropped, early ratings show

The early ratings for ABC's telecast of the 90th Oscars are down from last year and may be an all-time low.

The broadcast, which lasted nearly four hours, averaged a 18.9 rating in the 56 overnight markets measured by Nielsen. That was down 16 percent from last year's comparable figure, a 22.4 rating. The national audience count will be issued later.

The 2017 ceremony garnered 33.9 million viewers, the lowest since the 2008 ceremony hosted by Jon Stewart drew the smallest audience in Academy Awards history: 32 million viewers.

Los Angeles Times

OSCARS 2018: PARTIAL LIST OF WINNERS

BEST PICTURE

"The Shape of Water"

DIRECTING

Guillermo del Toro, "The Shape of Water"

ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE

Frances McDormand, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE

Gary Oldman, "Darkest Hour"

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

Allison Janney, "I, Tonya"

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

Sam Rockwell, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

ORIGINAL SCORE

Alexandre Desplat, "The Shape of Water"

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

Jordan Peele, "Get Out"

ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

James Ivory, "Call Me by Your Name"

ANIMATED FEATURE FILM

"Coco"

ORIGINAL SONG

"Remember Me," music: Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez; lyrics: Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, "Coco"

VISUAL EFFECTS

John Nelson, Gerd Nefzer, Paul Lambert and Richard R. Hoover, "Blade Runner 2049"

Los Angeles Times

READ MORE

Get the latest news on the Academy Awards at [Stripes.com/go/Oscars](https://www.fox.com/go/Oscars)

SHIFTING GEARS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VOLVO/TNS

Third time's a charm

Volvo XC40 is a crossover in a smaller, sportier package

By LARRY PRINTZ
Tribune News Service

Is the third time a charm? If you're Volvo, the answer is yes.

Having already offered the XC90 and XC60 crossover SUVs, the Swedish automaker is launching the compact XC40 for 2019. And while you might think that the last thing the world needs is another premium compact crossover, some time with this little love will convince you otherwise.

But before we get to that, a bit of background.

Volvo's new trucklet is 174.2 inches long, but at 65.2 inches high it's as tall as an XC60, allowing for 8.3 inches of ground clearance and 20-inch wheels. Like the Scalable Product Architecture, or SPA, which underpins the XC 90 and XC60, the XC40 employs the company's new Compact Modular Architecture, or CMA, which will underpin Volvo's 40-series cars as well as parent company Geely's forthcoming Lynk & Co. CMA has a fixed dash-to-axle ratio. In other words, the distance between the leading edge of the dashboard and the front axle is set and can't be changed. However, the rest of the platform can.

That said, the styling of the XC40 is a departure for the brand. Volvo didn't want to make the XC40 look like a smaller version of its larger siblings. Instead, it possesses its own identity, one meant to appeal to younger buyers and dubbed by Volvo as a "tough little robot." That explains the

available white roof on entry-level T4 models and a black roof on T5 models, as well as the optional 20-inch rims and funky window shape on the rear doors. But it works. Unlike its competitors, the XC40 doesn't possess the styling of its larger siblings awkwardly shrunken down, looking as if it were left in the dryer too long.

The same proves true inside, where some of the styling hallmarks of Volvo's larger crossovers carry over, but it's rendered with a sporty flair. The driver faces a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster, while the center of the instrument panel is anchored by a vertically oriented nine-inch touchscreen. Thankfully, it employs the same easy-to-use Sensus Connect soft-

ware from its bigger brothers and includes standard Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and an optional wireless phone-charging pad.

And while you may be smitten by the concave metallic trim that decorates the dash, there are other unique touches that are worth noting. If you're lacking a Y-chromosome, you'll be thrilled to discover that the XC40 has a bag hook that flips out of the top of the glovebox door. If you suffer from allergies, you'll be happy to know that the center console was designed to be large enough to hold a tissue box. And once those tissues are used, you can place them in the integrated removable trash bin, which is also useful for denizens of the drive-thru. And check out those spacious front-door map pockets. Working with Harman Kardon, designers moved the woofers to the dashboard from the doors. The spaciousness continues in the cargo hold, with almost 21 cubic feet of space. Usefully, there's a spot to hold the cargo cover when not in use.

But the space most buyers care about is for passengers, and it's here where Volvo delivers. There's adult-size space both front and rear, although the rear seat cushion is a little low. The flip is that this furnishes remarkable head room, even as the rear styling renders the rear seat a bit claustrophobic. Leather trim is standard.

When it comes time to move, you'll find a turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine under the hood, although how much power you get depends on which model you choose. The entry-level front-wheel-drive T4's engine produces 187 horsepower and

248 pound-feet of torque. The all-wheel-drive T5 delivers 248 horsepower and 258 pound-feet of torque. Both engines are paired to an eight-speed automatic transmission.

Volvo provided pre-production T5s to sample, and according to the automaker, 0-60 mph comes up in 6.1 seconds. Certainly the T5's engine has the muscle to move this little beastie with moxie, powering through corners, especially when changing the driving mode from Comfort to Dynamic. Don't think of using Eco unless you're lacking a pulse. This markedly awakens the XC40's responses, although it doesn't transform this into a sports car.

Instead, this is very athletic Volvo, and there's nothing wrong with that. For the XC40 still delivers the sort of handling/comfort balance that's long been a hallmark of the brand's vehicles. There's little drama, whether pushing hard through a corner on your favorite back road, encountering neglected roads at too high a speed, or tackling the cut and thrust of the daily commuter grand prix. The XC40's demeanor absorbs all that you can throw at it while remaining quiet, comfortable and composed.

And being a Volvo, it's loaded with safety gear, but you knew that.

In the end, what sets the 2019 Volvo XC40 apart isn't just its attractively distinctive look but its reimagining of the best aspects of Volvo crossovers in a smaller, sportier package.

Is the third time a charm? You bet is.

2019 Volvo XC40



Base price: \$34,195-\$38,695
Engine: Turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine

Horsepower: 248

Torque: 258 pound-feet

EV range: 21 miles

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BUSINESS/WEATHER

States mull sanctuary status for pot businesses

By BECKY BOHRER
Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — Taking a cue from the fight over immigration, some states that have legalized marijuana are considering providing so-called sanctuary status for licensed pot businesses, hoping to protect the fledgling industry from a shift in federal enforcement policy.

Just hours after U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced Jan. 4 that federal prosecutors would be free to crack down on marijuana operations as they see fit, Jesse Arreguin, the mayor in Berkeley, Calif., summoned City Councilman Ben Bartlett to his office with a novel idea.

Berkeley already was the first city in the nation to formally declare itself a sanctuary city on immigration, barring city offi-

cials from cooperating with federal authorities. Why not do the same thing with marijuana? Last month, it did.

"We knew we had to do something," Bartlett said. "This is a new engine of a healthy economy."

Others soon could follow Berkeley's lead. Alaska, California and Massachusetts lawmakers are among those with similar bills pending, though the chances for passage is unclear.

Alaska state Rep. Adam Wool, who owns a movie, restaurant and concert venue with a liquor license in Fairbanks, said he introduced his bill as both a statement and a precaution.

"If the federal government wants to prosecute someone for breaking federal law, I guess they have every right to do that," said Wool, a Democrat from one of Alaska's major marijuana-

growing areas. "I'm just saying, we will have no obligation to assist them."

Sessions' announcement invalidated a 2013 policy that allowed for legalized marijuana to flourish by limiting federal enforcement of the drug, as long as states prevented it from getting to places it was outlawed and kept it from gangs and children. His action also unsettled the industry and spooked potential marijuana industry investors. Marijuana is still illegal under federal law.

Casey O'Neil remembers helicopter enforcement raids of grow sites in California when he was growing up in the 1980s. It was then that his parents, carpenters who grew small amounts of cannabis, became schoolteachers, he said.

He now helps run a farm that produces vegetables and

marijuana for medical use near Laytonville, Calif., and is glad lawmakers are looking at ways to push back against the federal government.

Over the years, enforcement "has been uneven, we'll say, and that's kind of one of the things about it. It just means that everybody's always afraid, and that's hard," he said.

Dale Gieringer, director of California NORML, a marijuana advocacy group, said California has a lousy history with the federal government on marijuana enforcement.

"I don't think the feds care too much about marijuana in Alaska, to tell you the truth," he said. "But marijuana has been a big industry in this state, so we're sort of on the front lines."

There's no apparent panic in the industry over Sessions' change in

policy, given limited federal resources and prosecutors' having had discretion in bringing cases all along. But there isn't complacency either.

"I don't think the federal government is going to effectively step in and wipe us out of business. I just find that hard to believe at this point," said Jennifer Canfield, who co-owns a state-licensed marijuana cultivation operation and retail store in Alaska's capital city, Juneau.

"But they can make it hard for us."

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (March 6)	\$1.2633
Dollar buys (March 6)	69.7916
British pound (March 6)	\$1.41
Japanese yen (March 6)	103.00
South Korean won (March 6)	1,063.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
Canada (Dollar)	\$1.3818
China (Dollar)	1.2978
China (Yuan)	6.3422
Denmark (Krone)	6.6432
Egypt (Pound)	17.6351
Euro	\$1.2324/0.8114
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8318
Hungary (Forint)	254.78
Israel (Shekel)	3.4693
Japan (Yen)	105.81
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2999
Norway (Krone)	7.8339
Philippines (Peso)	51.89
Poland (Zloty)	3.41
Saudi (Riyal)	3.7504
Singapore (Dollar)	1.1399
South Korea (Won)	1,080.73
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9379
Thailand (Baht)	31.43
Turkey (Lira)	3.1899
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance. For Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, or nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.50
Discount rate	2.00
Federals funds market rate	1.00
3-month bill	1.65
30-year bond	3.14

Judge to weigh science behind Roundup cancer claim

By SUDHIN THANAWALA
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Claims that the active ingredient in the widely used weed killer Roundup can cause cancer have been evaluated by international agencies, U.S. and foreign regulators and the product's manufacturer — agribusiness giant Monsanto. Now, a federal judge in San Francisco will conduct his own review during an unusual set of court hearings scheduled to start Monday. It has big stakes for Monsanto and hundreds of farmers and others who have sued the company.

U.S. District Judge Vince Chhabria will spend a week hear-

ing from experts to help decide whether there is valid scientific evidence to support the lawsuits' claim that exposure to Roundup can cause non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Chhabria is presiding over more than 300 lawsuits against Monsanto Co. by cancer victims and their families who say the company long knew about Roundup's cancer risk but failed to warn them.

The plaintiffs first must persuade Chhabria that he should allow their epidemiologists and other doctors to testify to a jury that Roundup can cause cancer. Many regulators have rejected the link, and Monsanto vehemently

denies it and says hundreds of studies have found glyphosate — Roundup's active ingredient — is safe.

Chhabria will not determine if the cancer connection exists, but whether the claim has been tested, reviewed and published and is widely accepted in the scientific community.

"It's a game over for the plaintiffs if they can't get over this hurdle," said David Levine, an expert in federal court procedure at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law.

Monsanto developed glyphosate in the 1970s, and the weed killer is now sold in more than 160 countries. Farmers in California

use it on more than 200 types of crops. Homeowners use it to keep their lawns and gardens pristine.

St. Louis-based Monsanto also sells seeds genetically modified to produce crops that can tolerate being sprayed with glyphosate as the surrounding weeds die.

But the herbicide came under increasing scrutiny after the International Agency for Research on Cancer, based in Lyon, France — part of the World Health Organization — classified it as a "probable human carcinogen" in 2015.

A flurry of lawsuits against Monsanto in federal and states courts followed, and California added glyphosate to its list of chemicals known to cause cancer.

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

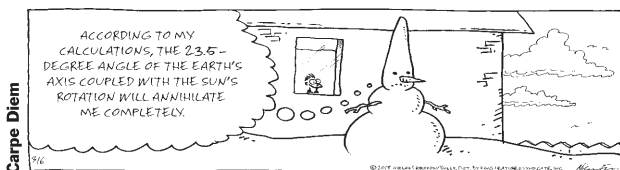
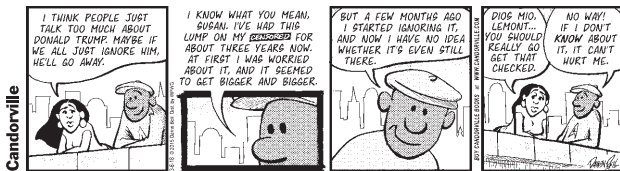
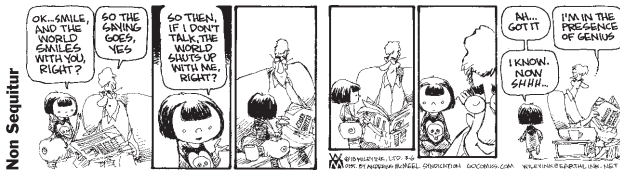
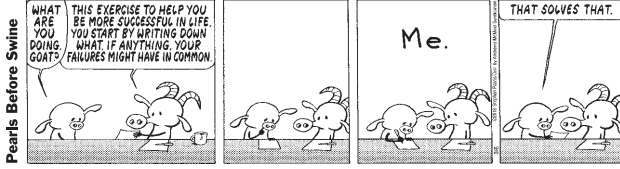
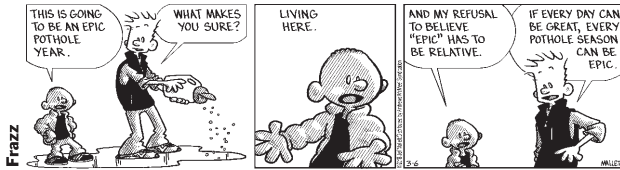


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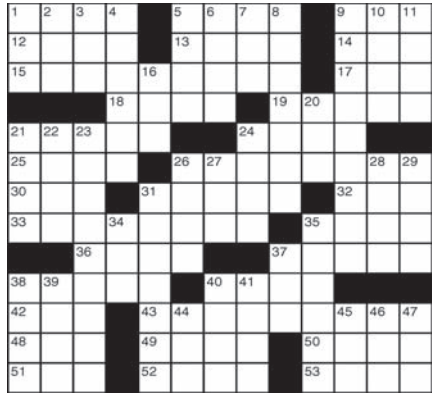
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Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Carton sealer
- 5 Slave
- 9 Status follower
- 12 Baldwin of "Aloha"
- 13 Mine, in Marseille
- 14 Olympics chant
- 15 Sausage dog
- 17 "A spider!"
- 18 Monet's supply
- 19 Actions
- 21 Church leader
- 24 Country singer Jackson
- 25 Regrets
- 26 Many a guard dog
- 30 Doctrine
- 31 Enjoy
- 32 Bar order
- 33 Curly-tailed dog
- 35 Cauldron concoction
- 36 Poet Sandburg
- 37 19th president
- 38 Anatomical sac
- 40 Ticked (off)
- 42 One-time link
- 43 Tall, slender dog
- 48 Tic — -toe
- 49 Impale
- 50 Lady of the hauss
- 51 Bashful
- 52 Longings
- 53 Skedaddled

DOWN

- 1 Wee bit
- 2 In the manner of
- 3 Chest muscle
- 4 Canyon comebacks
- 5 Satirist Mort
- 6 Flightless birds
- 7 Director Howard
- 8 Hoedown
- 9 Ship launched in 1934
- 10 Secondhand
- 11 Erstwhile acorns
- 16 Knight's address
- 20 Corn serving
- 21 Rocker Clapton
- 22 Rifle with foliage
- 23 Rule of the people
- 24 Madonna's "Take —"
- 26 Willy Wonka's creator
- 27 Egg (Pref.)
- 28 Out of the storm
- 29 Reporter's quest
- 31 Rough
- 34 Existed
- 35 Needing money
- 37 Sneaky laugh
- 38 Cave creatures
- 39 Hexagonal state
- 40 Seabird
- 41 Peepers
- 44 Shad product
- 45 Web address
- 46 Scot's denial
- 47 Lemon

Answer to Previous Puzzle



3-6

CRYPTOQUIP

YHVC AYHB, H FLMVC SO UCY
VSWWLMQUA'T XSSJ OQTCYBT
HMJ UHQDSBT VSWEYUY

Q M H T E S S D Q M X F Y Y.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: PROMINENT TALK-SHOW HOST KNOWN FOR HIS JOYFUL, ENERGETIC, SPRIGHTLY MANNER: JAUNTY CARSON.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals B


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SCAM FADS

Classifieds scams can target both sellers and buyers with classifieds advertisements.

Be aware of the common red flags.
Some of the latest Scam flags are:

- Vehicle buyers wanting to buy sight unseen and have the vehicle shipped through an agent using paypal.
- People saying Free Dog (different breeds) for adoption.

Automotive 140

SELLER BEWARE

Individuals placing classified advertising should use discretion in concluding the sale of their property. Not all potential buyers are reputable or honest. Stars and Stripes suggests that you take precautions to ensure that potential buyers are reputable and will be able to fulfill the terms of the sale. Stars and Stripes is not liable for the contractual relationship between sellers and buyers of merchandise advertised in the newspaper or on the web site.

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US SPEC Vehicles
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Career Center

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STARS  STRIPES®

Wizards guard Bradley Beal, left, is hit by Indiana's Victor Oladipo but does not get a foul call during on Sunday in Washington.

ATLANTA — Prince 8-16 0-0 22, Collins 1-6 2-2 4, Dedmon 3-8 0-7, Schroder 9-16 1-21, Dorsey 4-12 2-2 12, Muscala 4-6 0-0 9, 10, Plumlee 4-7 2-3 10, Delaney 4-9 1-2 12, Taylor 3-8 2-2 6, Morris 3-6 0-7 7, Totals 43-94 10-12 13.

Phoenix 23 33 31 25-112.

Atlanta 29 27 39 27-113.

Three-Point Goals—Phoenix 11-26 (Chris 4-5, Booker 3-6, Bender 2-7, Daniels 1-2, Warren 1-4, Harrison 0-1, Jackson 0-1), Atlanta 17-33 (Prince 6-8, Delaney 3-5, Muscala 3-3, Schroder 2-5, Dorsey 2-5, Morris 1-2, Dedmon 1-4, Collins 0-1).

Fouled Out—None. **Rebounds**—Phoenix 41 (Payton 10), Atlanta 49 (Plumlee 11).

Assists—Phoenix 33 (Payton 14), Atlanta 23 (Schroder 6). **Total Fouls**—Phoenix 15, Atlanta 18. **Technical**—Jackson, Prince. **Ejected**—Payton, Taylor. A—15,666 (19,049).

Clippers 123, Nets 120

BROOKLYN — Crabbe 2-11 0-0 6, Carroll 6-12 2-2 20, Allen 3-5 1-7 19, Dinwiddie 9-6 6-6 36, Russell 1-6 1-6 3-6 6, Cunningham 5-8 2-2 14, Hollis-Jefferson 6-14 3-4 15, JHarris 6-11 4-4 15, LeVert 11-19 0-0 27. **Totals** 40-92 21-23 120.

L.A. CLIPPERS — Thairist 11-19 2-2 26, 25, Johnson 0-1 0-0 0, Jordan 4-8 0 17, Rivers 10-15 3-4 27, Teodosic 5-8 2-3 14, Dekker 0-1 0-0 0, Gallinari 0-0 0-0 8, Harrell 3-13 6 11, Kilpatrick 1-4 0-0 2, Thornwell 2-3 0-0 5, LWilliams 8-22 4-5 21. **Totals** 44-88 25-30 123.

Brooklyn 27 26 33 34-120.

L.A. Clippers 32 33 26 32-123.

Three-Point Goals—Brooklyn 19-45 (Carroll 6-11, LeVert 5-7, JHarris 3-7, Cunningham 2-4, Crabbe 2-5, Russell 3-3), Hollis-Jefferson 0-1, Allen 0-1, Dinwiddie 0-3), L.A. Clippers 10-27 (Rivers 4-8, Teodosic 2-5, JHarris 2-5, Thornwell 1-1, LWilliams 1-6, Kilpatrick 0-1). **Fouled Out**—None. **Rebounds**—Brooklyn 44 (Hollis-Jefferson 8), L.A. Clippers 40 (Jordan 15).

Assists—Brooklyn 36 (Dinwiddie 10), L.A. Clippers 18 (Teodosic 4, LWilliams 10).

Total Fouls—Brooklyn 21, L.A. Clippers 15-18 (18,050).

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NFL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Fitzpatrick's skills might force teams to rethink position

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

MINDIANAPOLIS inkah Fitzpatrick understands the value of his skill set.

At 6-foot-1, 201 pounds, he hits like a safety. His speed, hip movement and feet might make him more tailored to cornerback.

So the Alabama star is spending this weekend explaining to NFL scouts he can excel at either, both or some combination of the positions.

"It's a different kind of position, kind of like a combination between safety and corner," said Fitzpatrick, describing the slot corner spot he played in college. "I like to play both safety and corner, so I think slot corner is optimal for my abilities."

If true, Fitzpatrick would be one of the rarest commodities in football — a tweener with an actual fit.

Traditionally when players at the NFL's annual scouting combine are explaining what position suits them best, it's because team executives aren't sure where they should play and the player's draft stock sinks.

But Fitzpatrick's physical gifts could make him a trend-setter in a league that has become increasingly more pass-happy and places a premium on versatility.

He was recruited as a true cornerback, moved to slot corner before the 2015 season, won the starting job and never relinquished it. Coach Nick Saban was so impressed he usually paired Fitzpatrick on the opponent's top receiver, one-on-one.

It didn't take long for Fitzpatrick to make an impact.

After being selected to the SEC's all-freshman team in 2015, he earned first-team All-American honors in 2016 and 2017.

Now he's off to the NFL, where teams are trying to figure out what Saban once did — the best place for Fitzpatrick to play.

"I think he could play all six defensive back positions. Both corners, both safeties, nickel and dime linebacker," NFL Network draft analyst Mike Mayock said Saturday. "He's the only guy I can say that about. Now, is that a good thing or a bad thing? I've had a couple of coaches say to me, 'Hey, is he a difference-maker? Is he a nickel? Where's his ball production?' He had six picks two years ago, but only had this one year. But I think [his versatility] is a positive."

Mayock's sentiment may explain why Fitzpatrick appears to have a slight edge on his competition right now. He's projected to be a top-five pick.

Some expect Ohio State's Denzel Ward, a true cornerback, to be selected in the top 10 with Florida State safety Derwin James the



VASHA HUNT, AL.COM/AP

Alabama defensive back Minkah Fitzpatrick was a two-time first-team All-American. He can play any position in the defensive backfield and might be one of the rarest commodities in football — a tweener with an actual fit.

only other defensive back tagged for the top 20.

The workouts in Indianapolis, which conclude Monday, will help determine the actual pecking order in April.

But one thing working in Fitzpatrick's favor: work ethic. While growing up in New Jersey, he sometimes helped his father fix trucks.

After the family's home collapsed during Hurricane Irene in 2011, Fitzpatrick helped his parents rebuild.

And when the Catholic high school he attended provided peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to students who couldn't afford school lunches, Fitzpatrick ate them up.

So when he arrived at the combine, less than two months away from possibly hitting a multimillion-dollar jackpot, the reality finally hit.

"It's really crazy," Fitzpatrick said. "I remember the second I got here, I was laying in bed, looked up at the ceiling and just started smiling."

Yes, it was a long trek here for Fitzpatrick and his family. Yet he hasn't forgotten his blue-collar roots, his humble perspective on life or his passion for football. It's served him well, so far.

"I think he's going to go out there and run like a corner, have the size of a safety, and if you're a defensive coordinator and take him in the top 10, you've got to have a plan," Mayock said. "What is he? Is he my safety, is he my corner, is he my nickel? Or is he a piece that I can match up week to week against a big wideout or a tight end? How you use him is ultimately going to determine the value of him."



Don PETERSEN/AP

Radford guard Carlrik Jones, left, celebrates after sinking a three-pointer to win the Big South Conference championship as teammates rush toward him to celebrate on Sunday in Radford, Va.

Roundup

Michigan wins 2nd straight Big Ten Tournament title

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Xavier Simpson was a catalyst on both ends of the floor, running Michigan's efficient offense and leading its lock-down defense, and the No. 15 Wolverines beat No. 8 Purdue 75-66 on Sunday to repeat as Big Ten Tournament champion.

Back-up big man Jon Teske scored 14 points to help fifth-seeded Michigan (28-7) become the first team to repeat since Ohio State in 2010 and '11.

Simpson finished with 10 points, five assists and five rebounds, and Moe Wagner led Michigan with 17 points, despite playing only 17 minutes because of foot trouble.

Isaac Haas led Purdue (28-6) with 23 points. **No. 10 Cincinnati 62, No. 11 Wichita State 61:** Jacob Evans scored 19 points and the visiting Bearcats beat the Shockers to wrap up the American Athletic Conference title.

Cincinnati (27-4, 16-2) survived a slugfest of a second half as the teams combined for just two baskets in the final five minutes.

Wichita State needed a victory to share the conference title and earn the top seed in the tournament after beating Cincinnati earlier this season.

Landry Shamet and Shaquille Morris each scored 16 points for Wichita State (24-6, 14-4).

No. 25 Houston 81, UConn 71: Rob Gray scored 30 points, Corey Davis Jr. had 17 and the host Cougars held off UConn.

Gray was 10-for-15 from the floor for Houston (24-6, 14-4 American Athletic Conference). Jalen Adams had 22 points and six assists for UConn (14-17, 7-11).

Conference championships

Lipscomb 108, Florida Gulf Coast 96: Madness. That's the only way to explain this.

Lipscomb led by 29 points at halftime, went up by 32 in the second half, then saw the lead get shredded down to five — on the road against a Florida Gulf Coast program that has squeezed the utmost from nearly every opportunity it has gotten in March since becoming the "Dunk City" NCAA darlings five years ago.

"We've experienced every emotion imaginable," Lipscomb coach Casey Alexander said.

With that, it's time to experience another: The Bisons are going to the NCAA Tournament for the first time.

Garrison Mathews scored 33 points and the second-seeded Bisons — once on the brink of all-out collapse — recovered just well enough in the final minutes to beat top-seeded FGCU in the Atlantic Sun Conference title game on Sunday and win the league's automatic berth into the field of 68.

Lipscomb (23-9) shot 65 percent from the field, an utterly ridiculous 87 percent from two-point range, and took 47 free throws to FGCU's 28 on the way to dethroning the two-time reigning A-Sun champion Eagles (23-11).

"Couldn't be happier," Alexander said. "Someone asked me how I was feeling. I don't even know."

Radford 55, Liberty 52: Carlrik Jones had clear instructions: Take the final shot of regulation and leave no time on the clock for Liberty to counter.

The freshman did just that, and swished a three-pointer at the buzzer on Sunday, giving Radford a 55-52 victory in the Big South championship and its first NCAA Tournament berth since 2009.

The result, Jones said, was better than the Highlanders' execution.

Radford (22-12) called timeout with 13 seconds left, setting up the final play. It was meant to be a double screen, but as Jones dribbled away the time, one of his teammates forgot his role, forcing Jones to make his move with about three seconds remaining.

"I had to let it go," he said. "You shoot it, and I looked at it after a while and I was like, 'That's good,'" he said.

"It's one of the greatest feelings ever."

Officials reviewed the play to be sure no time was left on the clock, and once that was confirmed, Radford fans began celebrating.

Jones had 13 points and six assists to lead the Highlanders, who'll carry a seven-game winning streak into the tournament.

Loyola-Chicago 65, Illinois State 49: Step aside, Northwestern. Take a seat, DePaul. For now, Loyola-Chicago is the king of Windy City basketball.

The Ramblers earned their first NCAA Tournament appearance in 33 years with a 65-49 win over Illinois State in the Missouri Valley Conference championship game on Sunday in St. Louis.

Donte Ingram scored 18 points and Cameron Krutwig added 11 points and nine rebounds for Loyola-Chicago (28-5), which reached the Sweet 16 in its last NCAA tourney appearance, in 1985.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Conference tournament scoreboard

America East Conference At Higher-Seeded Schools

First Round
Saturday, March 3
UMBC 89, UMass Lowell 77
Hartford 71, New Hampshire 60
Vermont 75, Maine 60
Stony Brook 69, Albany 60

Seminifinals
Tuesday, March 6
Stony Brook at Vermont
Hartford at UMBC

Championship
Saturday, March 3
Seminifinal winners

Atlantic Coast Conference
At New York

First Round
Tuesday, March 6
Boston College vs. Georgia Tech
Notre Dame vs. Pittsburgh
Syracuse vs. Wake Forest

Second Round
Wednesday, March 7
Florida State vs. Louisville
Virginia Tech vs. Boston College
Georgia Tech winner

Quarterfinals
Sunday, March 4
Virginia Tech vs. Notre Dame-Pittsburgh winner
N.C. State vs. Syracuse-Wake Forest winner

Quarterfinals
Thursday, March 8
Virginia vs. Florida State-Louisville winner
Clemson vs. North Carolina-Boston College-Georgia Tech winner

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Mike vs. Virginia Tech-Notre Dame-Pittsburgh winner
Miami vs. N.C. State-Syracuse-Wake Forest winner

Championship
Sunday, March 4
Lipscomb 108, Florida Gulf Coast 96

Atlantic 10 Conference
At Washington

First Round
Wednesday, March 7
La Salle vs. UMass
George Washington vs. Fordham

Second Round
Thursday, March 8
VCU vs. Dayton
George Mason vs. La Salle-UMass winner

Quarterfinals
Friday, March 9
Rhode Island vs. VCU-Dayton winner
St. Joseph's vs. George Mason-La Salle-UMass winner

Seminifinals
Saturday, March 10
Saint Louis vs. George Washington-Fordham winner
Richmond vs. Duquesne

Championship
Sunday, March 11
Saint Louis vs. George Washington-Fordham winner

Big East Conference
At New York

First Round
Wednesday, March 7
Georgetown vs. St. John's
Marquette vs. DePaul

Quarterfinals
Thursday, March 8
Xavier vs. Georgetown-St. John's winner
Creighton vs. Providence

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Illinois vs. Marquette-DePaul winner
Seton Hall vs. Butler

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Big Ten Conference
At Reno, Nev.

First Round
Tuesday, March 6
North Dakota vs. Montana State
Northern Colorado vs. Northern Arizona

Quarterfinals
Thursday, March 8
Montana State vs. Northern Arizona
Northern Arizona winner

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Idaho vs. Idaho State-Southern Utah winner
Eastern Washington vs. Portland State-Sacramento State winner

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Big South Conference

At Higher-Seeded School
Sunday, March 4
Radford 55, Liberty 52

Big Ten Conference
At Kansas City, Mo.

First Round
Wednesday, March 7
Oklahoma State vs. Oklahoma State
Texas vs. Iowa State

Quarterfinals
Thursday, March 8
Texas Tech vs. Texas-Louisiana winner
Texas vs. Oklahoma State-Oklahoma winner

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Texas Tech vs. Texas-Louisiana winner
West Virginia-Baylor winner

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

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Seminifinal winners

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Big West Conference
At Anaheim, Calif.

First Round
Thursday, March 8
UC Davis vs. UC Riverside
State Fullerton vs. Long Beach State, 5:30 p.m.
UC Irvine vs. Hawaii
UC Santa Barbara vs. Cal Poly

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Highest remaining seed vs. lowest remaining seed
Middle remaining seeds, Mid

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Colonial Athletic Association
At North Charleston, S.C.

First Round
Saturday, March 3
Drexel 70, James Madison 62
Northeastern 74, Delaware 50

Quarterfinals
Sunday, March 4
College of Charleston 66, Drexel 59
William & Mary 80, Towson 66
Northeastern 74, Delaware 50
UNC Wilmington 93, Hofstra 88

Seminifinals
Monday, March 5
College of Charleston vs. William & Mary
Northeastern vs. UNC Wilmington

Championship
Tuesday, March 6
Seminifinal winners

Conference USA
At Frisco, Texas

First Round
Wednesday, March 7
FIU vs. Southern Miss.
UTSA vs. UTEP
North Texas vs. Louisiana Tech
UTSA vs. FAU

Quarterfinals
Thursday, March 8
Middle Tennessee vs. FIU-Southern Miss. winner
Marshall vs. UTSA-UTEP winner

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Old Dominion vs. North Texas-Louisiana Tech winner
Western Kentucky vs. UAB-FAU winner

Horizon League
At Detroit

Third Round
Sunday, March 4
Milwaukee 80, UIU 72

Seminifinals
Monday, March 5
Oakland vs. Cleveland State
Cleveland State vs. Milwaukee
Wright State vs. Milwaukee

Championship
Tuesday, March 6
Seminifinal winners

Big Sky Conference
At Philadelphia

First Round
Saturday, March 10
Harvard vs. Cornell
Pennsylvania vs. Yale

Championship
Sunday, March 11
Seminifinal winners

Atlantic Athletic Conference
At Albany, N.Y.

Seminifinals
Sunday, March 4
Iona 65, Saint Peter's 62
Fairfield 74, Quinnipiac 64

Championship
Monday, March 5
Iona vs. Fairfield

Mid-American Conference
First Round

Monday, March 5
Bowling Green at Central Michigan
Northern Illinois at Kent State
Ohio at Miami (Ohio)
Akron at Western Michigan

At Cleveland
Quarterfinals
Thursday, March 8
Buffalo vs. Central Michigan-Bowling Green winner
Toledo vs. Kent State-Northern Illinois winner

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Toledo vs. Miami (Ohio)-Ohio winner
Eastern Michigan vs. Western Michigan-Akron winner

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference
At Norfolk

First Round
Monday, March 5
N.C. A&T vs. Delaware State
Norfolk State vs. Maryland-Eastern Shore

Championship
Tuesday, March 6
Howard vs. Florida
N.C. Central vs. Coppin State
Morgan State vs. S.C. State

Quarterfinals
Wednesday, March 7
Hampton vs. Howard
Bethune-Cookman vs. Morgan State
S.C. State winner

Seminifinals
Thursday, March 8
Savannah State vs. N.C. Central-Coppin State winner
Norfolk State-Maryland-Eastern Shore winner

Championship
Friday, March 9
Savannah State vs. N.C. Central-Coppin State winner

Championship
Friday, March 9
Savannah State vs. N.C. Central-Coppin State winner

Championship
Friday, March 9
Savannah State vs. N.C. Central-Coppin State winner

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Savannah State vs. N.C. Central-Coppin State winner

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Savannah State vs. N.C. Central-Coppin State winner

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Friday, March 9
Savannah State vs. N.C. Central-Coppin State winner

Championship
Friday, March 9
Savannah State vs. N.C. Central-Coppin State winner



Loyola's Carson Shanks, right, celebrates as Illinois State players, in background, react to the loss in the Missouri Valley Conference tournament championship game Sunday in St. Louis. Loyola beat Illinois State 65-49 and secured the automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Hampton-Howard-Florida A&M winner vs. N.C. A&T-Delaware State-Norfolk State-Maryland-Eastern Shore winner
Bethune-Cookman-Morgan State-Savannah State-Savannah State-N.C. Central-Coppin State winner

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Missouri Valley Conference
At St. Louis

First Round
Saturday, March 3
Loyola of Chicago 62, Bradley 54
Illinois State 76, Southern Illinois 69, OT

Championship
Sunday, March 4
Loyola of Chicago 65, Illinois State 49

Mountain West Conference
At Las Vegas

First Round
Wednesday, March 7
UNLV vs. Air Force
Utah State vs. Colorado State
Wyoming vs. San Jose State

Quarterfinals
Thursday, March 8
Nevada vs. UNLV-Air Force winner
Fresno State vs. Wyoming State
Utah State vs. Utah State-Colorado State winner

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Nevada-UNLV-Air Force winner vs. Fresno State-San Diego State winner
Boise State vs. Utah State-Colorado State winner
New Mexico vs. San Jose State winner

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

At Higher-Seeded Schools
Saturday, March 10
LIU Brooklyn 73, Robert Morris 64
Wagner 75, Robert Morris 64

Championship
Tuesday, March 6
LIU Brooklyn at Wagner

Ohio Valley Conference
At Evansville, Ind.

First Round
Saturday, March 3
Murray State 68, Belmont 51
Pacific 12, Central Michigan 55

Championship
Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

Championship
Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

Championship
Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

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Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

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Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

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Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

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Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

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Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

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Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

Championship
Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

Championship
Saturday, March 3
Murray State vs. Belmont 51
Pacific 12 vs. Central Michigan 55

Seminifinals
Friday, March 9
Arizona-Colorado-Arizona State winner vs. UCLA-Stanford-California winner

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Patriot League
At Higher-Seeded Schools

First Round
Sunday, March 4
Colgate 62, Holy Cross 55
Bucknell 90, Boston University 59

Championship
Wednesday, March 7
Colgate at Bucknell

Southeastern Conference
At St. Louis

First Round
Wednesday, March 7
Georgia vs. Vanderbilt
South Carolina vs. Mississippi

Second Round
Thursday, March 8
Texas A&M vs. Alabama
Missouri vs. Georgia-Vanderbilt winner

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Quarterfinals
Friday, March 9
Auburn vs. Texas A&M-Alabama winner
Kentucky vs. Missouri-Georgia-Vanderbilt winner, 3:30 p.m.

Seminifinals
Saturday, March 10
Tennessee vs. Mississippi State-LSU winner
Florida vs. Arkansas-South Carolina-Mississippi winner

Championship
Sunday, March 4
UNC-Greensboro 55, Wofford 55
ETSU 63, Furman 52

Championship
Sunday, March 4
Wofford vs. ETSU

Championship
Sunday, March 4
Wofford vs. ETSU

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Sunday, March 4
Wofford vs. ETSU

Jackson State-Southern winner
Alcorn State-Prairie View A&M winner vs. Alabama State-Texas Southern winner

Championship
Saturday, March 10
Seminifinal winners

Summit League
At Sioux Falls, S.D.

First Round
Saturday, March 3
South Dakota State 66, Western Illinois 60

Championship
Sunday, March 4
South Dakota State 66, Western Illinois 60

Championship
Sunday, March 4
South Dakota State 66, Western Illinois 60

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South Dakota State 66, Western Illinois 60

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Sunday, March 4
South Dakota State 66, Western Illinois 60

Championship
Sunday, March 4

NHL



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Predators left wing Filip Forsberg, center, follows the flight of his winning goal past Avalanche goaltender Semyon Varlamov, back, as defenseman Tyson Barrie trails the play in overtime Sunday in Denver.

Roundup

Predators beat A's in OT for eighth straight victory

Associated Press

DENVER — Nashville pulled off another comeback victory to remain the NHL's hottest team.

Filip Forsberg scored at 1:07 of overtime and the Predators matched the franchise record with their eighth straight victory, beating the Colorado Avalanche 4-3 on Sunday. They completed a 4-0 trip, winning the last two in overtime.

"We've proven to ourselves that we can come back," Forsberg said. "Getting four out of four wins on the road is ridiculous right now. But at the same time we can't get too high. We have to keep grinding and winning the games."

Nashville has won nine straight against Colorado, including three this season.

But Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said he still liked a lot of what he saw from his players in their latest effort against the Predators.

"I liked the way we played," Bednar said. "I thought we got a little better as the game went on. It was a pretty good all-around effort from our group. Pretty tight contest. They catch a break at the end and tie it up and end getting the extra point."

Nashville's Ryan Ellis tied it with 1:06 left in regulation with goalie Pekka Rinne off for an extra attacker.

"It's 6 on 5 where we talk about getting pucks to the net," Ellis said. "I had one shot that got stopped by the goalie and the next shot we had traffic in front of him and it got in."

The Predators carried the momentum into overtime, when Forsberg charged down the ice

and put in the winner with a shot from the side that got past goalie Semyon Varlamov.

"The confidence level of our team is really hard. It shows our character, knowing there is no giving up," Rinne said.

Ducks 6, Blackhawks 3: Jakob Silfverberg and Corey Perry each scored twice and Anaheim earned points at home for the eighth game in a row, beating Chicago.

Rickard Rakell scored for the third straight game, Marcus Pettersson had his first career goal, and John Gibson made 37 saves. The Ducks moved into third place in the Pacific Division, a point ahead of Los Angeles. They improved to 6-0-2 in their last eight games at home.

Panthers 4, Flyers 1: Evgenii Dadonov scored twice, Roberto Luongo made 39 saves and Florida beat Philadelphia for its season-best fifth straight victory — all at home.

Aleksander Barkov scored his 25th goal of the season and had an assist, and Jonathan Huberdeau added a goal. The Panthers are in the final Eastern Conference playoff position.

Philadelphia has lost three straight after winning six in a row.

Golden Knights 3, Devils 2: Trading deadline acquisition Tomas Tatar scored his first goal with Vegas and the Golden Knights beat host New Jersey to avoid their first four-game losing streak.

Deryk Englund and David Perron also scored for the Golden Knights. Marc-Andre Fleury, who stopped a half-dozen excellent chances in the first period, made

33 saves, including a last-second shot by Kyle Palmieri to win for the 22nd time in 53 games.

Jets 3, Hurricanes 1: Patrick Laine scored twice for the second straight game and extended his points streak to eight in visiting Winnipeg's victory over Carolina.

Laine had his third multi-goal game in the last four games and has seven multi-point nights during his streak. He has 10 goals and six assists in the eight-game stretch, and 35 goals overall.

Paul Stastny had a goal and an assist, and Connor Hellebuyck stopped 33 shots for the Jets. Tuomo Tuohimäki scored for the fourth straight game for the Hurricanes. Jordan Staal also scored.

Blue Jackets 4, Sharks 2: Artemi Panarin scored two goals and Columbus ended its California swing with the victory over San Jose.

Nick Foligno and Sonny Milano got Columbus started with first-period goals and Sergei Bobrovsky made 34 saves to help the Blue Jackets salvage the final game of their three-game trip. They remained a point ahead of Florida for the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

Wild 4, Red Wings 1: Eric Staal and Zach Parise scored in the second period, Jason Zucker added two late goals and host Minnesota beat Detroit.

Devan Dubnyk made 28 saves to help Minnesota rebounds from consecutive road losses at Arizona and Colorado. Staal and Parise scored in a 2:57 span to erase a 1-0 deficit. The goals came shortly after rookie Nick Seeler traded punches with Detroit's Luke Witkowski on a delayed penalty.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division									
Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Boston Bay	66	45	17	4	94	240	162		
Tampa Bay	66	40	15	8	88	209	158		
Toronto	67	39	21	7	85	220	190		
Florida	66	30	28	8	68	189	190		
Detroit	65	26	29	10	62	170	193		
Montreal	65	26	29	11	61	180	190		
Ottawa	64	22	32	10	54	174	225		
Buffalo	65	20	34	11	51	154	211		

Metropolitan Division

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Washington	65	37	21	7	81	203	193		
Philadelphia	66	34	21	11	79	200	190		
Pittsburgh	66	37	25	4	78	215	200		
New Jersey	63	33	25	8	74	193	199		
Columbus	66	38	5	3	71	176	186		
Carolina	66	29	26	11	69	176	198		
N.Y. Rangers	66	30	30	6	66	189	209		
N.Y. Islanders	66	29	29	8	66	213	237		

Western Conference

Central Division									
Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Nashville	65	42	14	9	93	214	168		
Winnipeg	65	39	17	9	87	220	175		
Minnesota	66	37	22	7	81	204	190		
Dallas	65	31	23	5	70	181	171		
Colorado	65	35	24	6	76	205	193		
St. Louis	66	35	26	5	75	180	176		
Chicago	66	28	30	8	64	188	195		

Pacific Division

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Vegas	65	42	18	5	89	225	180		
San Jose	66	35	22	9	79	196	184		
Los Angeles	65	31	23	12	74	197	183		
San Jose	66	36	25	5	77	192	165		
Calgary	66	32	25	9	73	185	195		
Edmonton	65	34	24	7	74	183	176		
Vancouver	65	24	32	9	57	176	214		
Arizona	64	20	34	10	50	159	209		

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Saturday games

Tampa Bay 7, Philadelphia 6, 5O	
Illinois 3, St. Louis 2, 2-1	
Chicago 5, Los Angeles 3	
Boston 2, Montreal 1, OT	
Washington 5, Toronto 2, OT	
Arizona 2, Ottawa 1	

Sunday's games

Nashville 4, Colorado 3, OT	
Florida 4, Philadelphia 1	
Nashville 6, Chicago 3	
Vegas 3, New Jersey 2	
Minnesota 4, Detroit 1	
Winnipeg 3, Carolina 2	
Columbus 4, San Jose 2	

Monday's games

Chicago at Pittsburgh	
Ottawa at Buffalo	
Calgary at Arizona	
Arizona at Edmonton	

Tuesday's games

Winnipeg 9, N.Y. Rangers 5	
Vegas at Columbus	
Montreal at New Jersey	
Detroit at Boston	
Florida at Tampa Bay	
Carolina at Minnesota	
Dallas at Nashville	
Colorado at Chicago	
Washington at Anaheim	

Wednesday's games

Calgary at St. Louis	
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia	
Arizona at Vancouver	

Sunday

Ducks 6, Blackhawks 3									
Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Chicago	0	1	2	3					
Blackhawks	0	2	2	6					

First Period —1, Anaheim, Rakell 27 (Getzlaf, Montour), 2:23 (pp), 2, Anaheim, Peltonen 31 (Kane), 6:14	
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Second Period —3, Anaheim, Pettersson 1 (Grant, Bieksa), 2:09, 4, Anaheim, Silfverberg 14 (Grant, Bieksa), 6:29, 5, Chicago, Jurco 2 (Murphy, Keith), 14:59	
Third Period —1, Anaheim, Silfverberg 15 (Cogliandro, Kesler), 7:00, 8, Anaheim, Perry 1 (Fowler, Getzlaf), 16:41, 9, Chicago, Schmalz 20 (DeBrincat, Hinrichs), 17:56	

Shots on Goal —Chicago 10-18-12-40, Anaheim 11-12-8-31	
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Power-play opportunities —Chicago 0 of 2; Anaheim 1 of 2	
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Goalies —Chicago, Berube 1-10 (10 shots-8 saves), Forsberg 8-14-3 (21-17), Arizona, Gibson 24-6-16 (40-37)	
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A —16:59 (17,17A), T—2:24	
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Predators 4, Avalanche 3 (OT)

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Nashville	1	1	1	1	4				
Colorado	1	0	2	0	3				

First Period —1, Nashville, Watson 10 (Sissons, Ekholm), 3:50, 2, Colorado, Zadorov 6 (Soderberg, Lindholm), 12:57	
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Second Period —3, Nashville, Turris 12 (Ellis, Paila), 8:06 (pp)	
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Third Period —4, Colorado, Nieto 13, 4:38, 5, Colorado, Rantanen 22 (McGinnin, Barrie), 14:22 (pp), 6, Nashville, Ellis 13 (McGinnin, Barrie), 18:54	
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Overtime —7, Nashville, Forsberg 18 (Arvidsson, Ellis), 1:07	
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Shots on Goal —Nashville 8-7-14-27-31, Colorado 10-7-7-21-26	
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Goalies —Nashville, Rinne 35-9-4 (25 shots-22 saves), Colorado, Varlamov 18-13-4 (31-27)	
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A —17:18 (18,007), T—2:33	
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Panthers 4, Flyers 1

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Philadelphia	0	0	1	1					
Florida	2	1	1	4					
First Period —1, Florida, Barkov 25 (Luongo, Yandell), 2:41 (pp), 2, Florida, Dadonov 19 (Bjugstad, Ekblad), 14:49									

Second Period —3, Philadelphia, Konecny 17 (Manning, Groulx), 16:39	
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Shots on Goal —Philadelphia 9-14-17-40, Florida 10-9-7-26	
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Goalies —Philadelphia, Mrazek 11-9-4 (25 shots-22 saves), Florida, Luongo 12-7-1 (40-39)	
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A —14:28 (19,250), T—2:39	
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Jets 3, Hurricanes 2

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Winnipeg	1	1	1	3					
Carolina	1	0	1	2					

First Period —1, Winnipeg, Laine 34 (Morrow, Ehlers), 5:40, 2, Carolina, Tereven 19 (Faulk, Aho), 18:51	
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Second Period —3, Winnipeg, Laine 35 (Wheeler, Stastny), 2:37 (pp)	
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Third Period —1, Winnipeg, Stastny 14 (Charot, Laine), 10:06, 5, Carolina, Staal 15 (Slavin, McGinn), 15:48	
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Shots on Goal —Winnipeg 9-10-23-30, Carolina 11-9-8-35	
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Power-play opportunities —Winnipeg 0 of 2; Carolina 0 of 2	
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Goalies —Winnipeg, Hellebuyck 34-10-6 (26 shots-23 saves), Carolina, Ward 19-10-4 (23-20)	
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A —11:40 (18,680), T—2:12	
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Wild 4, Red Wings 1

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Detroit	1	0	0	1					
Minnesota	1	0	1	0					

First Period —1, Detroit, Abdelkader 11 (Erickson, Larkin), 3:58	
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Second Period —2, Minnesota, Staal 34 (Spurgeon, Suter), 7:22 (pp), 3, Minnesota, Parise 8 (Medveder, Kovin), 10:15	
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Third Period —4, Minnesota, Zucker 27 (Granlund, Suter), 15:42, 5, Minnesota, Zucker 28 (Dumba), 16:22	
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Shots on Goal —Detroit 11-9-9-29, Minnesota 5-14-17-35	
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Power-play opportunities —Detroit 0 of 2; Minnesota 1 of 3	
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Goalies —Detroit, Howard 18-22-27 (26 shots-23 saves), Minnesota, Dubnyk 28-12-5 (23-28)	
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A —19:37 (18,064), T—2:26	
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Golden Knights 3, Devils 2

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Vegas	0	3	0	0					
New Jersey	0	0	2	0					

Second Period —1, Vegas, Perron 16 (Hylla, Merrick), 4:39, 2, New Jersey, Vatanen 3 (Hall, Maroney), 8:44 (pp), 3, Vegas, Engelland 4 (Reaves, Lecavalier), 11:17, 4, Vegas, Tatar 17 (Perron, Hunt), 17:43 (pp), 5, New Jersey, Hall 30, 17:55	
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Shots on Goal —Vegas 8-15-27-27, New Jersey 11-15-9-35	
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Power-play opportunities —Vegas 1 of 2; New Jersey 1 of 3	
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Goalies —Vegas, Fleury 22-8-3 (35 shots-33 saves), New Jersey, Schneider 17-14-6-24	
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A —16:514 (16,514), T—2:31	
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Blue Jackets 4, Sharks 2

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Columbus	2	1	1	4					
San Jose	0	1	1	2					

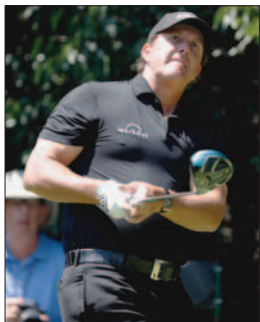
First Period —1, Columbus, Foligno 14 (Gronlund, Calvert), 5:12, 2, Columbus, McMillan 11 (Jenner, Bjorkstrand), 18:01	
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Second Period —3, Columbus, Panarin 19 (Cole, Anttonen), 5:32, 4, San Jose, Boeser 10 (Gardner, Miller), 12:44	
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Third Period —5, San Jose, Kane 21 (Pavelski), 10:04, 6, Columbus, Panarin 20 (Gardner, Miller), 12:44	
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Shots on Goal —Columbus 10-16-12-28, San Jose 11-15-9-35	
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GOLF/AUTO RACING



EDUARDO VERDUGO/AP

Phil Mickelson tees off on the 2nd hole during the final round of the Mexico Championship in Mexico City on Sunday.

Mickelson a winner again

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Phil Mickelson knew this was coming, even when he had so little to show for it.

Mickelson had gone 101 tournaments around the world since he last won at Muirfield in the 2013 British Open, which moved him to No. 2 in the world and gave him the third leg of the career Grand Slam. In more than two decades on the PGA Tour, he had gone only two seasons without winning.

And then it was up to four straight years and counting.

There was more frustration than self-doubt. And with Mickelson, even at age 47, there was never a loss of confidence.

"I knew that wasn't going to be my last one, no," he said. "And this isn't either."

The most recent one came in the high altitude of the Mexico Championship, and it was another pulsating performance, as often is the case with Mickelson.

Five birdies in the opening 10 holes gave him the lead. Right when he was on the verge of taking control, he went for the green on the par-5 11th hole only for the shot to carom off a tree and into the bushes near the edge of Chapultepec Golf Club. Deep in the bushes, he blasted out and hit the crowd. He wound up making bogey. Then came another wild drive that bounced along the cart path, forcing him to scramble for par.

Three groups ahead of him, Justin Thomas delivered the shot of the tournament. Eleven shots behind going into the week-end and suddenly tied for the lead, Thomas holed out from 119 yards on the final hole for eagle to cap off a 62-64 weekend as he went for his second straight victory.

Mickelson closed with a 66 and headed to sudden-death with Thomas, a duel between players separated by 23 years of age. The playoff ended quickly. Thomas went long with a gap wedge to the par-3 17th and chipped to 10 feet short of the hole. Mickelson hit the green, narrowly missed the birdie putt and walked off a winner when Thomas — the PGA Tour player of the year last season and already a two-time winner this season — missed his putt.

Mickelson, who captured his third World Golf Championship, now has 43 victories on the PGA Tour. The first was in 1991 — before Thomas, Spieth and Rahm were even born — when he was an amateur. He has long said he wants to get to 50. "Oh, I will," Mickelson said about reaching 50 titles. "I'll get there."

Harvick dominates in Sin City

Victory comes on heels of last week's win in Atlanta

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — From his dynamic opening laps to his comfortable cruise to the checkered flag, Kevin Harvick was the safest bet in Sin City this weekend.

Harvick's air of inevitability increased with each lap around the Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Sunday, and the rest of the NASCAR Cup field must be a bit worried about how they're going to catch up this year.

Harvick raced to his second straight NASCAR Cup win with a dominant performance in Vegas on Sunday, earning his 100th career win across the three national series.

"There was no catching that 4 (car)," second-place finisher Kyle Busch said. "He was on rails, and lights out."

Harvick followed up his stellar performance last weekend in Atlanta with another victory in his Stewart-Haas Racing Ford. He led a track-record 214 of the 267 laps, won all three stages and capably held off Busch's late hometown charge to win in Vegas for the second time in four years.

"These last two weeks, we've just hit on everything we needed to," said Harvick, who cruised home 2.9 seconds ahead of Busch. "My (team has) done their homework on a number of things. Just really proud of everybody."

Busch got close to his second career victory in his hometown with his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, but couldn't overcome the dominant leader. Kyle Larson finished third after winning the Xfinity Series race on Saturday, while defending champion Martin Truex Jr. was in fourth and pole-sitter Ryan Blaney in fifth.

Harvick has already matched his Cup win total from last season in three races — and he's headed to Phoenix, where he has won five times since 2012.

Harvick also took a moment to savor a milestone. Only Richard Petty, Kyle Busch and David Pearson have won more races across the three national circuits than Harvick, the 42-year-old Californian with plenty of good years left on his tires.

"It's been a lot of years accumulated with a lot of great race teams and people and situations," Harvick said. "When you tag that triple-digit number to it, it really lets you realize that you've been fortunate to accomplish a lot of things."

Not many wins are more emphatic than Harvick's 100th.

Harvick led 144 of the first 160 laps and comfortably won the first two stages. He was fourth out of the end-of-stage caution after Stage 2, with Joey Logano getting in front with an exceptional pit stop.

But Harvick reclaimed the lead off another restart with 73 laps to go after Kurt Busch wrecked along with Chase Elliott. Harvick emerged from his last pit stop with a three-second lead on Brad Keselowski, and Busch couldn't catch up.

Here are more things to know about the race on the Strip:

Doing record: For the first time, NASCAR is returning to Vegas in the fall for a second race, which will also be the playoff opener. Teams used this trip to gather data and information for the return trip in September, although the temperature could easily be 50 degrees higher than the balmy 53 degrees at Sunday's race. "The adjustments we made today are going to help in the fall," Kyle Busch said. "(Although) I



PHOTOS BY ISAAC BRENNEN/AP

Above: Kevin Harvick speeds to victory in the No. 4 car during Sunday's Cup series race in Las Vegas. Left: Harvick lifts the trophy after his second straight win.

up in town. Kurt Busch failed to win the Cup race in Vegas for the 17th time. He has started on the pole twice, but has only one top-five finish here despite calling it a top priority in his career.

Winning big: Harvick was even more dominant in Vegas than Truex was last year. Truex led all three stages and 150 laps last year on his way to a victory that propelled him into his championship season.

Three strikes: The car chiefs for Jimmie Johnson and Ross Chastain were ejected after their cars failed inspection three times during the pre-race checks. Johnson had to start at the back after his chief, Jesse Saunders, got the gate. Johnson also will have practice time taken away next week in Phoenix. The seven-time champion still rallied to finish 12th.

Comeback story: Josh Franks, the tire-changer on Darrell Wallace Jr.'s Richard Petty Motorsports team, injured his hand while preparing for the Vegas race and was sent to a hospital on Sunday morning. Michael Hubert filled in for him on pit road. The injury couldn't keep Franks down, however: He returned to the track for the race.

think the track is going to be a lot slower with the heat."

Kubus can't do: Kurt Busch's career-long victory drought in his hometown continues. Busch lost control and ran Elliott into the wall shortly after a restart early in the final stage. The crash necessitated a long caution for fluid cleanup. The 39-year-old Busch has never won at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, which was built while he grew

SPORTS



On top in Big Ten

Wolverines conference champs again with victory over Purdue » **Page 28**

NBA

Reinventing Wade

3-time NBA champion embracing latest role

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

MIAMI

This is not the first reinvention of Dwyane Wade. Or the second. Or the third.

His 15 NBA seasons have been a series of role changes — the latest being where the most celebrated player in Miami Heat history watches five younger players start games while he waits for a chance to enter as a sub. But nearly a month after the trade that brought him back to the Heat, Wade has zero complaints.

“The finished product of Dwyane, you guys have seen me win three championships and all that,” Wade said. “But I’ve had so many different roles in my life in playing basketball. I came off the bench for a long time before y’all knew who I was. I’m 36 years old. These guys are the future of this organization and this team. I’m definitely not the future. I’m cool with that.”

Still, he’s vital to Miami’s hopes right now.

Wade is clearly going to play a sizable role in the Heat’s playoff push, in all sorts of ways. The savvy veteran who can be a de facto assistant coach in the locker room, on the practice floor and on the bench.

The guy who makes Miami crowds roar simply by removing his warmups checking into games. The closer, who’ll be on the floor in the most critical minutes of games.

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‘I’ve had so many different roles in my life in playing basketball. ... I’m 36 years old. ... I’m definitely not the future. I’m cool with that.’

Dwyane Wade
Miami Heat guard



Dwyane Wade has repeatedly reinvented his game over the course of his 15-year NBA career. Now back in Miami after stints with the Chicago Bulls and Cleveland Cavaliers, Wade is ready to contribute however he can to the Heat’s playoff push.

DAVID SANTIAGO, EL NUEVO HERALD/TNS

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